

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO **Sewing**

DIGITAL EDITION

Learn to sew today!



28
PROJECTS
& PATTERNS
+
EASY TO USE
TUTORIALS

FELT
BASKET
P82

Go ahead... get creative!



JP760 A $\frac{3}{4}$ size machine that is light enough to carry to classes, yet packed with 60 stitches and full of computerised features to make sewing easy.



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Welcome...

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...to *The Beginner's Guide To Sewing!*

Whether you're new to sewing, want to refresh your skills and learn some new ones, or are in need of inspiration for things to make, then this is the magazine for you.

Sewing is a fantastic skill to have – not only is it really useful for making lovely things for your home but it'll save you money and it's wonderfully therapeutic too. It's often really hard to find accessories and items for your home and yourself which fit exactly in terms of colour, shape, size and taste – but once you've learnt to make them yourself then you are only limited by your imagination.

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We're going to show you what tools and materials you'll need and what's available to buy. We'll explain the basics to sewing, including a step-by-step guide on using your sewing machine. Then we'll teach you some essential techniques as well as the skills needed for hand and machine sewing. Each skill is followed by projects where you can practice the technique and make a beautiful item into the bargain.

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So, turn the page and learn to sew with us – it's a wonderfully absorbing hobby and very addictive too!

Rebecca



Rebecca Reid, Editor



BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO Sewing

Learn to sew today!

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for dozens of
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Loads of
fabric ideas,
and hints &
tips, to inspire
you!

Iron the fusible web pieces, paper side up, on the wrong side of the fabric and let them cool. Place a damp tea towel on top of the web as this will help protect it and stick the glue.

Start sewing today...

Whether you're a complete beginner to sewing or just want to refresh your skills, *The Beginner's Guide to Sewing* has a great mix of projects and tips for you...

Handmade is super-trendy right now and sewing seems to be everywhere – whether it's about making your own or buying ready-made. If you're completely new to sewing then don't worry, you'll find everything you need here to show you how. Starting off with some essentials, we'll show you, in easy-to-follow guides how to master the basic techniques of sewing from perfect seams to brilliant buttonholes. Each guide is then followed by a project using that skill to make a beautiful finished item. Sewing really is all about practise, practise, practise and that's what you'll have plenty of as you work your way through. You'll learn new skills in the hand and machine sewing sections and, again, be inspired to make some gorgeous things for you and your home.



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Our Essential Techniques section starting on **page 23** will teach you all the basic skills you need, from perfect hems to using bias binding and much more.



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First off, turn to **page 10** and **page 13** for an at-a-glance guide to what products you need to buy and which fabrics you'll need to use.



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We guide you through how to get the best out of your sewing machine – see **page 20**.

Ed's Picks



Sewing a bound edge to a square of fabric is a quick and easy way to make a stunning set of napkins. We show you how to stitch the fabric strips on and make a really neat finish. Get to grips with binding skills on **page 44**.

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Adding a casing to the top of a piece of fabric (**page 74**) is a useful skill for making drawstring bags, which can be used for so many things, like this fun Toy Sack for a child - just perfect for keeping everything neat and tidy (**page 76**).

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Using fusible web to attach simple appliquéd shapes (**page 94**), and learning how to work some basic embroidery stitches (**page 106**), means you'll be able to decorate favourite items of clothing and make lovely things, like textile pictures. Our stunning projects will inspire you to make and create your own designs.

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1

Practical & pretty

The best way to practise embroidery is to make something as lovely as it is useful. The cute **coffee cosy** on p107 fits the bill perfectly.

2

My perfect gift

I love making gifts for loved ones, and it's even nicer to stitch a little drawstring bag to wrap up the present in style. That's why I love the pretty **floral bag** on p78.

3

Use all your skills

Once you've mastered all the sewing skills you can make **Sebastian the Snail**, our cute **cuddly toy** on p154. He's my all-time favourite!

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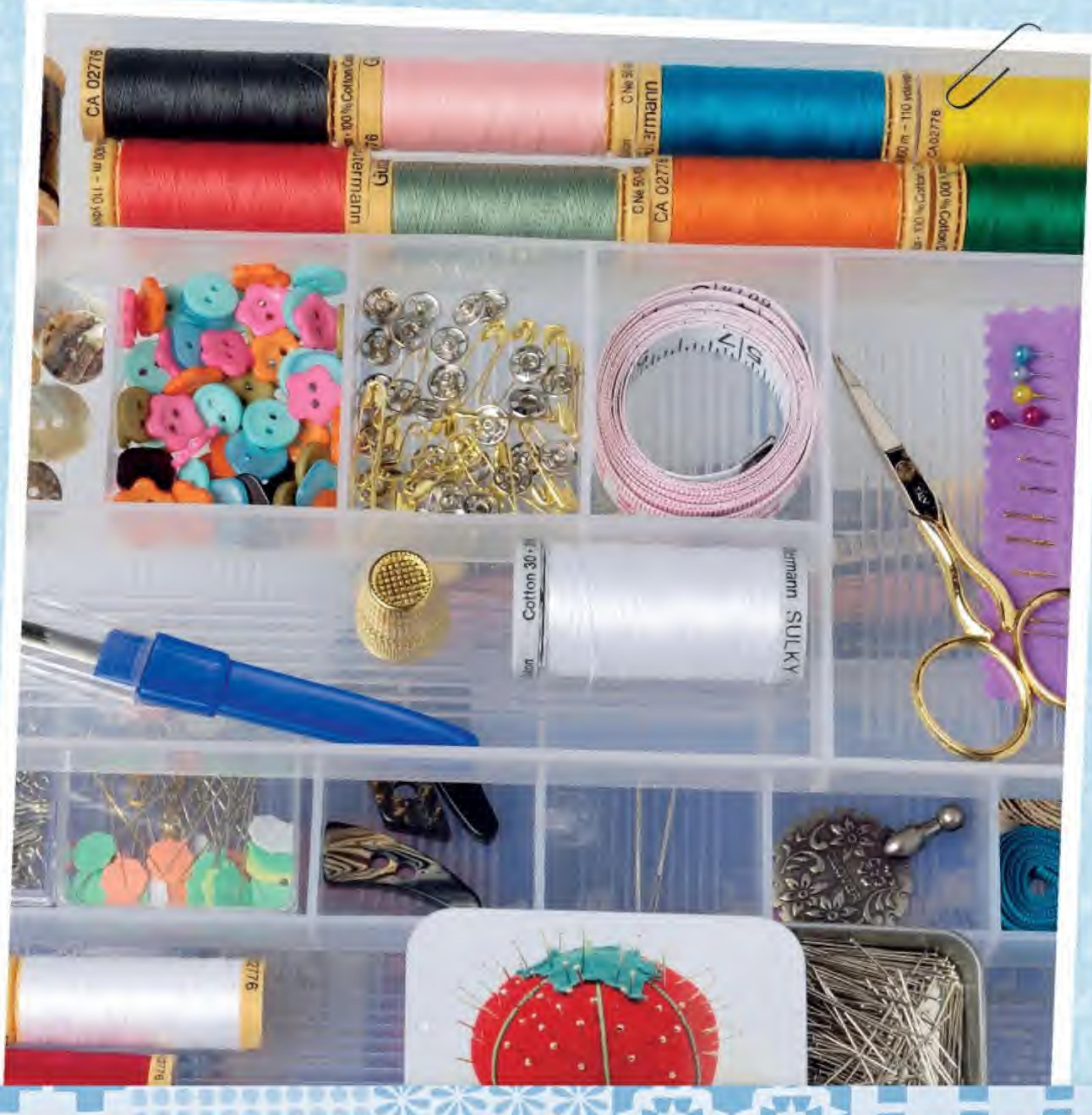


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Materials & tools

In this chapter, we'll talk you through a few of the supplies you'll need to start sewing. Get ready to top up your tool kit, find favourite fabrics and learn the lingo with our handy glossary.



Tools & notions

If you're all brand new to sewing, we'll talk you through a few basic supplies that may come in handy along the way

THREAD

There's a thread for almost every occasion and your local fabric shop will be able to help you find the right one for your project. Cotton is a fabulous all-purpose thread, but polyester (or a mix) is handy if you need extra strength. Cheap thread is more likely to break easily, so it's worth spending a little more for a great finish.

BUTTONS

Whether you're using them for practical fastenings or just for decoration, you can never have enough buttons! They're usually sold by size (diameter in millimetres/inches), either individually or in packs. Most are flat, but 'shanked' buttons have a loop on their underside that helps thicker fabrics to sit beneath them when the garment is buttoned up.

FASTENINGS

Snap fasteners (also known as press studs) are used to hold two pieces of fabric together and can't be seen from the front. Hooks and eyes hold fabric edges flush together or you can buy magnetic fastenings, which are ideal for bag and purse closures. Safety pins are great for securing thicker fabrics or for threading cord through casings.

SEAM RIPPER

Everyone makes mistakes now and then, and this clever gadget takes some of the frustration out of unpicking your stitches. Simply slip the pointed end under your stitch (taking care not to catch the fabric as you go) and cut through it by gently pulling upwards. Look out for non-slip handles as these make the seam ripper easier to use.

THIMBLE

It's a good idea to save yourself from pricked or calloused fingers with a thimble. They are usually worn on your middle finger to help you push your needle through thicker fabrics. Thimbles come in different shapes and sizes and are made from plastic, porcelain, metal or leather. Choose one that fits snugly but not tightly.

EMBROIDERY SCISSORS

At about 10cm (4in) long, these are much smaller than fabric scissors. Whether you're hand sewing or working on a machine, the fine, straight blade makes them good for trimming stray threads and removing excess fabric in tight spaces.

NEEDLES

The needle you use is dependent on what you're

sewing. You'll find all sorts of specialist needles are available for embroidery, quilting and cross stitch, but a pack of assorted sewing needles is a good place to start. When you choose your needle, make sure the eye is just large enough for your thread to go through but not too large that it's constantly slipping out. Use a sharp pointed needle for all sewing – the blunt ones are used for cross stitch and needlepoint.

THREAD CUTTER

Essential for the travelling stitcher, this nifty device enables you to snip your threads even when you don't have the space for (or are not permitted to carry) scissors. Some cutters double up as a pendant, so you can wear them around your neck. If you plan to sew on a flight, take a minute to check the airline's restrictions before you travel.

FABRIC

You'll usually purchase fabric by the yard or metre, but if you just want a small amount of material, opt for a 'fat quarter', which is a yard that's been cut into four sections, making a piece of fabric that measures about 46x56cm (18x22in). You can buy these individually or in

bundles. See page 13 to find out more about the different types of fabric.

PINS

You'll use these to hold your pieces of fabric in place. You might find traditional dressmakers' pins fiddly to work with – if so, try pins with larger glass or 'flower' heads. Most are between 2.5-5cm (1-2in) long, so you could always collect a variety to use on different projects. Don't forget to buy a tin or make a pincushion to keep them safe!

DRESSMAKERS' SCISSORS

A pair of dedicated dressmakers' scissors will help you snip through any fabric with ease. Look for some that are about 20cm (8in) long and have a curved handle to enable accurate cutting on flat surfaces, with pointed tips for precision. Avoid using your scissors on anything other than fabric or you will blunt the blades.

TAPE MEASURE

Measuring fabric correctly is crucial to a perfect finished project (measure twice, cut once!), so a tape measure is one of your most important tools. Find one that measures around 150cm (59in) and has both metric and imperial units for quick conversions.





EXTRA TOOLS

As your skills develop, so will your toolbox. Buy good quality items and they'll last you for years. Here are a few more tools and notions you'll find indespensable as you start to tackle more complex projects.

BEADS

Use beads to add a touch of glamour and sparkle to your projects – choose from glass, ceramic, wooden or metal. Seed beads are the smallest variety, but if you're new to beading then you may find larger ones easier to work with. Attach seed beads with a beading needle – it has a small eye to slip through the bead.

METAL RULER

Keep a ruler in your sewing kit to make sure you get perfect measurements every time. Your ruler should have both metric and imperial units – a 15cm (6in) ruler is enough for smaller projects. Go for durable metal rather than plastic and you'll also be able to use it as a guide for creating straight lines with a rotary cutter.

ROTARY CUTTER

Used to cut fabric, rotary cutters are extremely sharp and should be kept away from children. They're popular with quilters because they can cut several layers of material at once and give more even results than scissors. Decide what size blade you need before you buy – small diameters tend to be better at cutting curves.

CUTTING MAT

A cutting mat protects your work surface while you're

using a rotary cutter. Most are 'self-healing' (meaning that any scratches magically disappear after use) and are printed with grid lines to help you line up your fabrics. Cutting mats are about 2mm thick, come in a range of sizes and should be stored flat so they don't bend and warp.

LARGE NEEDLES

It's a good idea to keep a few larger needles in your sewing box, so you always have the right one available for your project. Tapestry needles, for example, are great for tasks such as threading elastic through a hem to create a drawstring, while chenille needles are perfect for embroidery as they have a larger eye.

PINKING SHEARS

Some woven fabrics can fray easily, but you can help prevent this by cutting them with a pair of pinking shears. These leave a

zigzag edge that's great for storing fabrics and also makes a pretty decorative effect. Choose a pair with steel blades and a contoured handle that's comfortable to work with.

TAILOR'S CHALK

Before you start stitching you'll need something to transfer guidelines on to your fabric. Tailor's chalk is ideal for this because it goes on and comes off easily – so easily, in fact, that you may need to be careful you don't brush it off by accident. Choose basic white or go for a coloured chalk if you're working with pale fabrics.

FABRIC PENCIL

Fabric pencils are ideal for marking finer lines on to your fabric. They come in different types – iron-on, air erasable, water erasable and chalk (which will brush off). They also come in different shades, so you can find the colour that

stands out best on your material. Soapstone pencils rub off easily and show up on darker fabrics.

FABRIC PEN

For extra precision, and lines that are easier to see on pale cloth, use a soluble fabric pen to mark out your design. Always test the pen on a scrap of fabric before you begin to ensure that it comes off easily with water, and avoid ironing over any of the marks because this can make the line permanent. Fabric pens are good to use for embroidery.

EMBROIDERY THREAD

As the name suggests, these are most commonly used for embroidery, cross stitch and other forms of needlework. They're usually made from six strands of cotton, which you can separate into individual strands. If you're following a chart then you'll see a key with numbers that correspond to the required colours of thread.

SEWING MACHINE NEEDLES

You'll find there are many types of sewing machine needle to choose from – including specialist varieties just for leather – and different sizes are suitable for different fabrics and stitches. To ensure compatibility with your machine, check the manual for recommended brands and weights. See page 20 to find out more.

BASIC SEWING KIT

Whatever project you decide to tackle, there are a few essential bits and bobs you should always have to hand. With the following items in your kit you'll be ready for anything!

- Fabric scissors
- Small embroidery scissors
- Needles (assorted sizes)
- Sewing thread (various colours)
- Tape measure
- Pins
- Pin cushion
- Transfer pencil or chalk
- Iron & ironing board
- Sewing machine





Fabrics

There are hundreds of fabrics to choose from, but which should you buy? We help you understand your options and pick the perfect material for every pattern

WOVEN FABRICS

Woven fabrics are made from two groups of threads, a warp (the threads that run lengthwise) and a weft (the threads that run widthwise). The fabric may be plain or patterned, according to the colour and sequence of warp and weft yarns used. It'll also have a border around the edge called a selvedge, which is more tightly woven to prevent the fabric from unravelling – but you don't use this in your sewing. If you are making a project that is going to be used a lot then choose a fabric that can be easily washed and is colourfast.

COTTON

Cotton is one of the world's most popular woven fabrics. It's strong, easy to work with and can be machine washed at high temperatures. However, it creases easily, so do make sure you press cotton fabric regularly as you cut and stitch it. Most patchwork fabrics are made from 100% cotton, which is ideal as you can buy a variety of patterns and colours and join them together as they are all the same weight. Polyester cotton works in the same way but will crease less – it doesn't have the crisp feel of pure cotton, though.

LINEN

Linen, woven from flax fibres, is even stronger than cotton, although it has a higher tendency to crease. Its natural appearance makes it ideal for that homespun look, but again, remember to press it regularly as you are working. Linen is perfect for tea towels and table linen, as when washed and pressed, it is lovely and crisp.

HEAVIER WEIGHT FABRICS

Home furnishing fabrics, canvas, cotton drill, denim and corduroy (including needlecord) are great choices for projects that need a bit more strength

such as bags and aprons.

They will also add more structure to the finished projects so will look better. Some soft furnishing fabrics have the added bonus of a protective stain-resistant finish making them ideal for items that are vulnerable to spillages, such as seat pads and outdoor table linen.

DELICATE FABRICS

Silk, cotton lawn and some vintage fabrics need a little more special care as they are much finer to work with. Only use these for projects that won't be treated harshly, such as lingerie and decorative items like dainty bags or pictures.



Other fabrics...

FELT AND FLEECE

Felt is created by matting woollen fibres in hot soapy water, either by hand or in a machine. You can also felt knitted fabric by washing it in a machine at a high temperature. Fleece is also known as polar fleece and has a combed nap, which makes it warm and cosy. Always iron fleece with a thin cloth on top of it to prevent it from felting, or being flattened too much. These fabrics have become popular with crafters and beginners because they are fray-resistant, don't stretch like woven materials, can easily be cut to any shape, and come in an array of interesting colours and textures. They're ideal for appliqué for this reason.

NET AND LACE

Net and lace are made by knotting together lengths of thread to create a pattern. These materials are often used as decoration, and are best cut with small, sharp sewing scissors for a neat finish. They can be used for appliqué or to edge or decorate an item. Many lace fabrics and trims are made from artificial fibres, but check what your lace fabric is made from before you wash it, in case of potential shrinkage.

INTERFACING

Interfacing gives an extra layer of support to your material – to stiffen bags or fabric baskets, for example. Choose an interfacing that's slightly lighter than your main fabric, and if

FABRIC WIDTHS

Fabrics are sold in standard widths, which vary according to their purpose – for example, dressmakers' or patchwork cotton cloth generally comes in standard widths of 90cm (36in) or 115cm (45in). However, some manufacturers use metric units and some use imperial, so a fabric measuring 36in will actually be a bit wider

than 90cm. You will also see 'fat quarters', which is a quarter of a yard or metre of fabric produced by cutting half a yard or fabric in half across the length, making a piece of fabric about 45.5x56cm (18x22in). Curtain or soft furnishing fabric is normally 137cm (54in) wide and is really useful for bags and aprons as it's thicker and stronger than dressmaking fabrics.





you're using a fusible (iron-on) option then always test it on a scrap of the fabric first. Interfacing is available in different weights and as an iron-on or sew-in version. With fusible interfacing, press the shiny side to the wrong side of your fabric. Tack sew-in interfacing to the wrong side of the fabric pieces around the edges. Medium interfacing is soft and lightweight and you should use this to add a little body to your finished item. Firm interfacing is stiffer and will add more definition and structure. For more in-depth detail, turn to page 80.

INTERLINING AND WADDING

Curtain interlining is a more flexible alternative to

interfacing and will give projects such as bags and baskets a fuller look. Tack this to the wrong side of your main fabric then work with it in the usual way. It's ideal for putting between the main fabric and lining on the base of a bag. Wadding comes in many different weights and materials and is not only used as the padding between the top layer and backing on quilts but also to add shape and softness to bags and fabric boxes.

TEAR-AWAY STABILISER

This non-woven material is perfect for machine embroidery as it adds body to the finished item and supports the fabric. After stitching, gently tear away the excess stabiliser.

VINTAGE FABRICS

The beauty of vintage fabrics is that they already have that worn homespun look and will give a truly unique feel to your finished project. Buy old fabric items such as table linen, curtains and even old clothing from sales and cut them up to use for new projects. Hand wash vintage fabrics before you use them to ensure the colour doesn't run and to remove possible years' worth of dust and dirt.

KNOW YOUR NAP

Nap is the direction of the raised pile on a material such as velvet and fleece and it makes the fabric look and feel different from different angles. If you brush 'against the nap', the fabric feels rougher. When you cut out different pieces make sure the nap runs in the same direction on each one.





Glossary

From appliqué to zigzag stitch, our reference guide explains all the common sewing terms you need to know about

APPLIQUÉ

A decorative technique that involves sewing a smaller piece of fabric onto a larger one. It may be done by hand or machine.

BACKSTITCH

Useful when starting and ending sewing to stop stitches coming undone, this can be done by hand or using a machine: stitch back over your sewing line.

BASE PLATE

Also called 'needle plate', it is the metal plate on a sewing machine beneath the foot. It often has measurements marked on it, which to use as seam allowances guides.

BIAS

The bias lies at 45° to the lengthwise and widthwise grains of the fabric. Fabrics have more stretch when cut along the bias.

BIAS BINDING

This is a length of fabric that has been cut on the bias so that it'll bend and stretch easily around curves. It's used to bind or enclose the edges of fabric for a neatly finished look.

BLANKET STITCH

This stitch is used to reinforce the edges of a piece of material. It may also be decorative.

BOBBIN

This small plastic or metal spool holds thread and sits in the sewing machine below the foot. The bobbin thread and the top thread meet to form each stitch.

BODKIN

A blunt-headed needle used for threading ribbon, elastic or cord through a casing or a hem.

BOLT

A length of fabric stored on a roll. They are commonly found in fabric shops, where they can easily be stacked for display.

CASING

A tunnel of fabric fored with parallel rows of stitching

through which elastic or cord can be threaded.

FABRIC GLUES

Available as permanent or temporary sprays or liquids.

FACING

A fabric trim or lining that finishes edges, rather than leaving them raw.

FAT QUARTER

A quarter of a metre (or yard) of fabric, 45.5x56cm (18x22in), made by cutting half a metre/yard in half across the length.

FELT

A woollen fabric that has been washed so the fibres bond together. It's great for toys and accessories.

FINISH

An edge is described as finished when it has been sewn or hemmed to reduce fraying. The technique used will depend on the fabric.

FOOT

On a sewing machine, this sits under the needle and keeps your fabric in place. Specialist feet are available for different techniques, such as a zipper foot, or a buttonhole foot, or a quarter-inch foot, which has markings to keep hems or seams even as you sew.

FUSIBLE WEB

This is the fabric form of double-sided sticky tape. It is an interfacing type of fabric, which has glue on both sides so you can stick fabric shapes to a fabric backing. This is most often used in appliqué.

GRAIN

The arrangement of threads in a piece of fabric. Lengthwise grain is created by the warp threads and crosswise grain by the weft.

GUSSET

A piece of fabric shaped to fit into other seams for ease of movement, or to add a base to a bag, for example.

HEM

To hem a fabric, turn its edge under (towards the



inside) and sew it in place. This helps prevent fraying and can be decorative.

INTERFACING

A layer added to the wrong side of a piece of fabric to provide extra strength or stiffness. It may be ironed on or sewn in place.

LENGTHWAYS

The long edges of a piece of fabric. So, if instructions tell you to fold fabric in half lengthways you fold along the longest edge.

LINING

An underlying, often lightweight fabric used to give a neat finish, as well as to conceal seams and the back of stitching.

MITRED CORNER

The 45° diagonal seam made where two different pieces of fabric meet at a corner. Often used in cushion making.

NOTCH

Small triangle wedges of fabric cut from curved seams to reduce the bulk of the seams to help them

lie flat. Cut larger notches on really tight curves.

NOTION

A general term for sewing tools and accessories. Notions include needles, pins, threads and buttons.

PATTERN PAPER

Paper that comes with a printed grid for you to draw up your own patterns.

PINKING SHEARS

A pair of scissors that cut a zigzag edge on fabrics. They can be used to reduce fraying or for decorative purposes.

PINS

There are different types of dressmakers' pins available. Look for ones with glass rather than plastic heads so they won't melt when you press over them.

POLYESTER FIBREFILL

Also known as 'soft toy filling', this is ideal for stuffing any fabric shapes like small cushion and toys. You can buy non-allergenic fillings, which are ideal for allergy sufferers or children.

PRESS

A method of smoothing out creases that's gentle on the grain. Lift the iron between presses rather than running it across fabric, especially on artificial fibres.

QUILTING

Placing a layer of wadding between two layers of fabric and sewing through all three layers by hand or machine creates a padded, or quilted, item.

RAW EDGE

The edge where a piece of fabric has been cut. This may unravel over time if it isn't finished with a hem or binding (for example).

REVERSE STITCH

Machine stitch that simply stitches back over a row of stitches to prevent the seam from unravelling.

RIC-RAC

A flat, zigzag-shaped decorative braid, available in many colours and widths.

RIGHT SIDE

The front of a piece of fabric, which shows the

design. Some fabrics don't have an obvious right side.

ROTARY CUTTER

This can cut through multiple layers of fabric in a straight line. It should be used with a cutting mat.

RUNNING STITCH

A basic stitch used for many hand-sewing purposes and as the basis of embroidery. Made by passing the needle in and out of the fabric to create evenly spaced stitches.

SAFETY PINS

These are ideal for holding the three layers of top fabric, wadding and backing fabric together on a quilt before you tack and quilt it. You can also buy curved safety pins which pass through the three layers more easily.

SATIN STITCH

This stitch is used to create a solid 'filled' area or line. It can be produced with a sewing machine, using a very narrow zigzag stitch, or sewn by hand with stitches lying very close together.





SEAM ALLOWANCE

The distance that you need to leave between your stitching and the raw edge of the fabric. This is typically 6mm (1/4in) for patchwork, 1.5cm (1/2in) for general sewing or 1.6cm (5/8in) for dressmaking, but will be stated on your pattern or sewing instructions.

SEAM RIPPER

A tool that unpicks stitches by cutting through thread, protecting the fabric.

SELF-COVERED BUTTONS

These can be bought in packs of white plastic or metal and in a range of diameters. Cover them in scraps of fabric for unique buttons to embellish a project or jazz up clothing.

SELVEDGE

The edge of the fabric, usually tightly woven so it doesn't fray. It may include information, such as the manufacturer and pattern repeat length. There are also coloured circles to show the shades used in the pattern.

SLIP STITCH

Use this to apply bindings or appliqué, or to close seams after you've turned an item the right way out. This technique is a good way to make an invisible hem and gives a better drape than machine finishing, which can be too heavy.

STANDARD FABRIC WIDTHS

Fabric sold on the roll comes in different standard widths. Metric to imperial conversions may vary, so always measure the fabric yourself if width is important.

STRAIGHT STITCH

The basic sewing machine stitch. Alter the stitch length using the relevant dial on your machine.

TACKING STITCH

A long running stitch used as temporary fixing stitches before an item is sewn permanently. Referred to as basting in the USA.

TEMPLATE

A shape made from paper or thin card which you draw round onto fabric to create

accurate shapes – they are used mostly in appliqué and English patchwork.

TENSION

Even-sized stitches are important in hand and machine sewing so your fabric doesn't pucker. Adjust the tension of the thread and bobbin on a sewing machine. Check your tension on a scrap of fabric before beginning a new project.

TOP STITCH

A row of stitches, visible on the right side of the fabric, that runs parallel to the seam about 6mm (1/4in) from the edge. Often decorative, it helps the seam lie flat.

WADDING

Available in different weights, it forms the central layer of padding in quilts between the top and the backing fabrics. Small running stitches are worked through it to create a quilted effect. Wadding can also be used in pictures for a slightly raised effect.

WARP

Warp threads run lengthwise along a woven fabric, at right angles to the weft. There is almost no stretch or give in the warp threads of a fabric.

WEFT

Weft threads run crosswise along a woven fabric, at right angles to the warp. Weft threads sometimes contain a little stretch.

WIDTHWAYS

The short edges of a piece of fabric. So, if instructions tell you to fold fabric in half widthways you fold along the shortest edge.

WRONG SIDE

The back of a piece of fabric, though some fabrics don't have an obvious right or wrong side.

ZIGZAG STITCH

This machine stitch is used on the raw edges of a seam to reduce fraying. A narrow zigzag is often used around buttonholes. It can also be sewn as a decorative hand stitch.



Washing

Treat your fabrics with love and they'll last for years to come

Most handmade fabric items will need washing from time to time and it's important to know how to do this properly to keep them looking fresh.

It's always best to wash all fabrics before you begin cutting or stitching them. Although the temptation is to get started on a project, taking the time to do this is really worth it. Fabric can shrink when washed and often at different rates.

So, if you are stitching several different fabrics together you may find that they shrink differently and you will have an uneven finished piece.

Sometimes, especially if using vintage fabrics, the colours can run so it's best to get all this shrinking and excess dye release out of the way before you start stitching. Also, it's much easier to cut and stitch with newly washed and pressed fabric as it's crisper and flatter.

Most fabric you'll be using is 100% cotton so simply unfold it, put it all in the washing machine (remembering not to mix up darks and lights) and wash it on a 30°-40° cycle. If the fabric isn't pure cotton then handwash it in warm water with a suitable detergent then rinse thoroughly. Many fabrics have washing symbols on the selvedge – use this handy guide to refer to when washing and pressing your fabrics.

WASHING



Wool, cashmere and delicates where the temperature needs to be similar to handwashing



Cotton, linen or viscose articles without special finishes where colours are fast at 40°C but not 60°C



Cotton, linen or viscose articles without special finishes where colours are fast at 60°C



Handwash (do NOT machine wash)



Acrylics, acetate and triacetate, including mixtures with wool; polyester/wool blends



Nylon; polyester/cotton mixtures; polyester cotton and viscose articles with special finishes; cotton/acrylic mixtures



Wool, wool mixed with other fabrics; silk



Do NOT wash

IRONING



Iron on hot temp setting



Iron on warm temp setting



Iron on cool temp setting

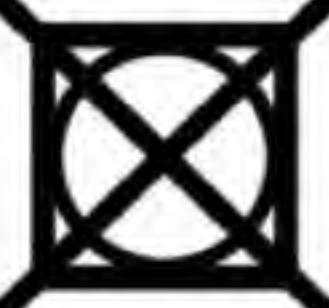


Do NOT iron

TUMBLE DRYING



May be tumble-dried



Do NOT tumble-dry

BLEACHING



Chlorine bleach may be used



Do NOT use chlorine bleach

DRY CLEANING



Dry-clean



Dry-clean using any solvent



Dry-clean using any solvent EXCEPT trichloroethylene



Dry-clean using petroleum solvent only



Do NOT dry-clean

DRYING AND PRESSING

Once you've washed your fabric, hang it on the line to dry or drape it over the banisters inside if you prefer. While it's still just slightly damp, iron out the creases and you're ready to begin. If it's an artificial fabric, such as polyester or fleece, then place a thin clean cloth on top of it before you press.



Get to grips with... MACHINE SEWING

We've got all the know-how so you can get the best from your sewing machine

Sewing by hand can be wonderfully relaxing, but if you want to make up items such as curtains, cushions and more for your home then you'll need a sewing machine. Whether you're a complete newcomer to

machine sewing or a relative beginner who could do with a refresher, here's our top-to-bottom guide to help you find your way around your machine. We guarantee you'll be whizzing up projects in next to no time!

Needle

A sewing machine needle moves in and out of the fabric without going all the way through as it would in hand sewing. Most machines come with a needle already in place, but your manual will show how to swap it for a different one. Standard needles are typically size 75 or 80 (UK sizing). For tougher jobs, such as sewing denim or very heavy curtains, go for a larger number – 110 or 120. When sewing a fine fabric such as organza or a sheer net curtain, use a fine size 60. When you buy your fabric, it's worth asking which needle is best for the job.

Foot

This is the metal attachment that sits beneath your needle and holds your fabric in place. There's a lever to move it up and down. Raise it up when positioning your fabric and move it back down when sewing. The basic presser foot is the one you'll use most, though there are dozens of speciality feet for everything from quilting to attaching zips and creating buttonholes.

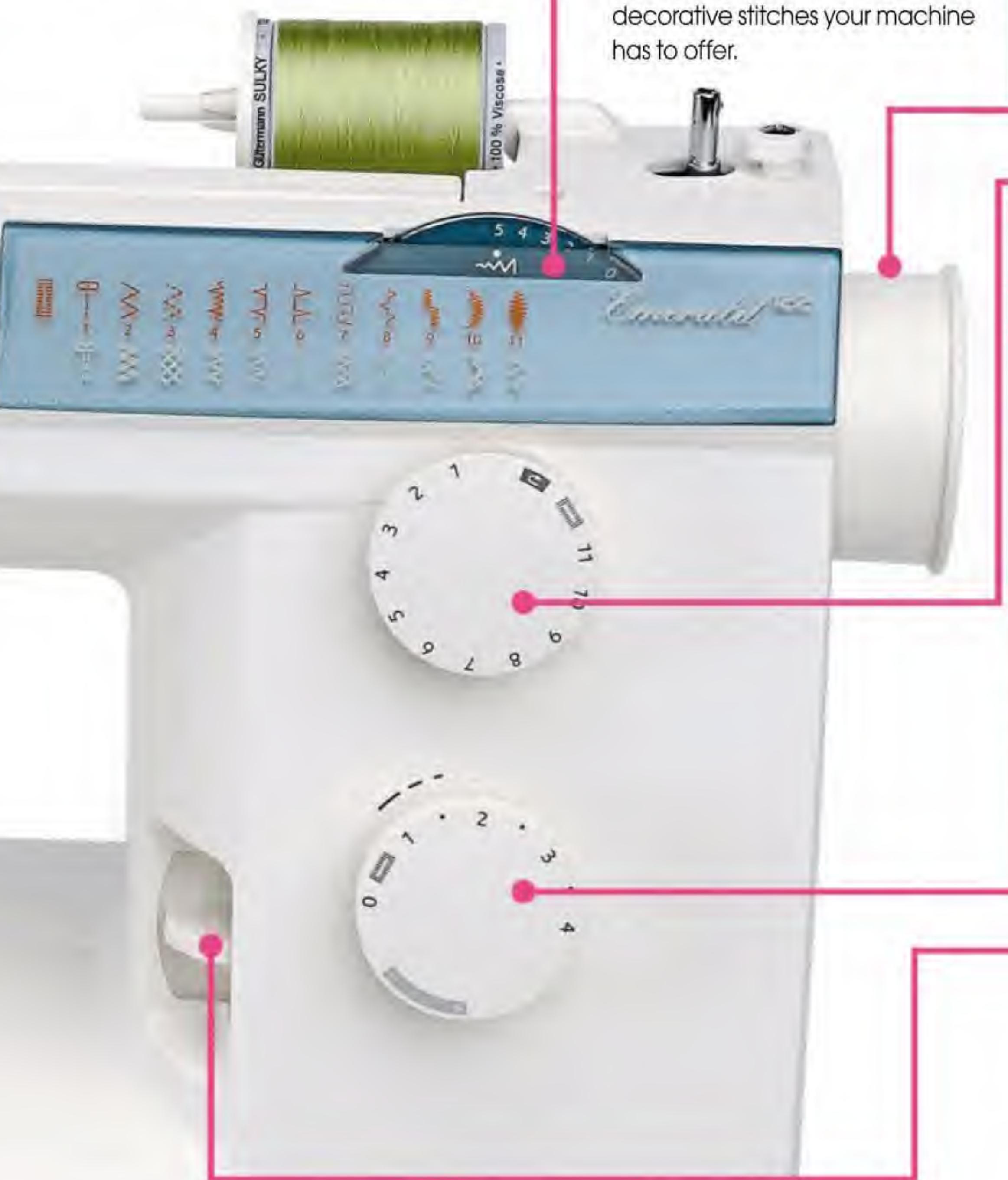
Bobbin

This small plastic or metal spool sits in a special housing underneath the sewing area, below the foot and needle. Check the manual for your machine to find out exactly how to load your bobbin. Once loaded, the bobbin thread and the top thread feeds meet to form each stitch.



Thread feed

Your spool of thread sits at the top of the machine. It threads through a series of numbered channels and loops before it reaches the needle. This maintains an even thread tension and avoids tangles. Your machine will have a numbered dial that can be raised or lowered to adjust the tension as your fabric requires.



Stitch selector

Dials, switches, knobs... the method used to change the stitch type varies between machines, but the principle is the same. For most craft and home projects, all you'll need are the basic straight stitch and zigzag. Once you're more experienced, you can try some of the more decorative stitches your machine has to offer.



Hand wheel

Use the hand wheel to move the needle up and down manually. It's essential for controlling the sewing line in tight spots and corners. To avoid your thread getting caught or tangled, be sure to always turn the wheel towards you. When winding bobbins, you'll need to disengage the needle action by pulling out the hand wheel. Consult your manual to learn exactly how to do this on your machine.

Stitch width

Sometimes this function is built in, so the machine automatically adjusts itself as you change the stitch type. If your machine has a dial, leave the width at 0 for straight stitches because the needle doesn't need to move from side to side. For all other stitches, adjust the width as needed, practising on a scrap of fabric first.

Stitch length

A dial or knob will enable you to change the length of your stitches, whether they're simple straight stitches, zigzags or any other pattern. A long stitch length is useful for creating quick tacking lines. For regular sewing, aim for a length of around 2 or 2.5, which will be strong enough for most ordinary seams.

Reverse stitching

Most machines have a button or switch that enables you to sew in the reverse direction. Even older machines should have a method for reverse stitching. It's the best technique to start and finish off your sewing - all you need to do is stitch forwards and backwards for a few centimetres to secure your threads.

Foot pedal

The foot pedal is connected to the machine and sits on the floor. The pedal is pressure-sensitive, so gentle pressure results in slow stitching, while pressing harder will run the motor faster. Some machines also have a separate speed control, which gives you even more command over your pace.



Get the best from your SEWING MACHINE

1 Use the same colour of thread in the top and bottom spools for most of your stitching – only use different colours for decorative stitching.

2 Use the same type of thread in the top and bottom spools, as you will get a more even tension.

3 Always ensure your fabric is flat and smooth, as you will get neater stitching. Pressing before you start is always a good rule.

4 Always work a few stitches on a spare scrap of the same fabric you will be using to make sure the tension is correct. Different thread and fabric need different tensions. If the stitches are loopy or overly

tight then you need to change the tension so that the top and bottom thread loop together evenly. Read your machine manual to see how to change the tension as each machine differs.

5 The most important thing about machine stitching is keeping your stitching straight. Machines come with marked measure lines on the needle plate – keep the edge of your fabric running along it as you stitch. Stitch very slowly to start with and increase your speed as you gain confidence.

6 If you are stitching curves, stitch very slowly and gradually ease the fabric round using both hands so you stitch a neat curved line.

7 Don't forget to clean your machine regularly as fluff gets caught under the teeth and this will stop your machine working smoothly. Your manual will show you how to remove the needle plate and get all the fluff out.

8 Get your sewing machine serviced regularly or if you don't feel it stitching the same as usual – it will make a great deal of difference! Look online to find your nearest machine service or repair shop.

9 Keep your sewing machine covered up when you're not using it to keep the dust out, and protect it from accidents. With your new-found skills you could even make your own pretty cover!

10 Have a look at all the different stitches your machine can do and read your manual, which will tell you what to do with them. Mostly, you will only use the straight stitch for seams and hems, but the zigzag stitch can be just as useful – it's brilliant for working along the edge of a fabric to stop it from fraying. You can alter the length and the width of the zigzag using your machine dials, so adjust it to suit your fabric weight. The zigzag stitch can also be used for decoration so have a practice to see which different effects you like.

11 Change your needle regularly – they become blunt with time and use, and your machine won't stitch as well.

MACHINE STITCHING



1 Raise the presser foot and slide the fabric under it where you want to start sewing. Your machine probably has an indicator guide on the plate, giving measuring guides for seam allowances. Line up the fabric edge with this guide.



2 As you control the speed of your sewing with the foot pedal, feed the fabric under the presser foot. If you find that you need to support the fabric with a little more tension, hold it in front of, and behind, the foot and ease it gently through.



3 It's easy to turn a corner without finishing your thread. Make sure the needle is down in the fabric at the point where you need to turn, then raise the foot and spin the fabric round to the new direction. Lower the foot and carry on sewing.



4 Once your stitching line is done, finish securely by making a few stitches back and forth over your line. With the needle in the up position, raise the presser foot and pull out your fabric. The threads will still be attached, so snip these off.



Essential Techniques

In this chapter you'll learn all the essential techniques needed for sewing. Each section starts off by teaching you the individual skills, then there are projects so you can practise and perfect them.

All about... PINNING, TACKING AND HAND STITCHES

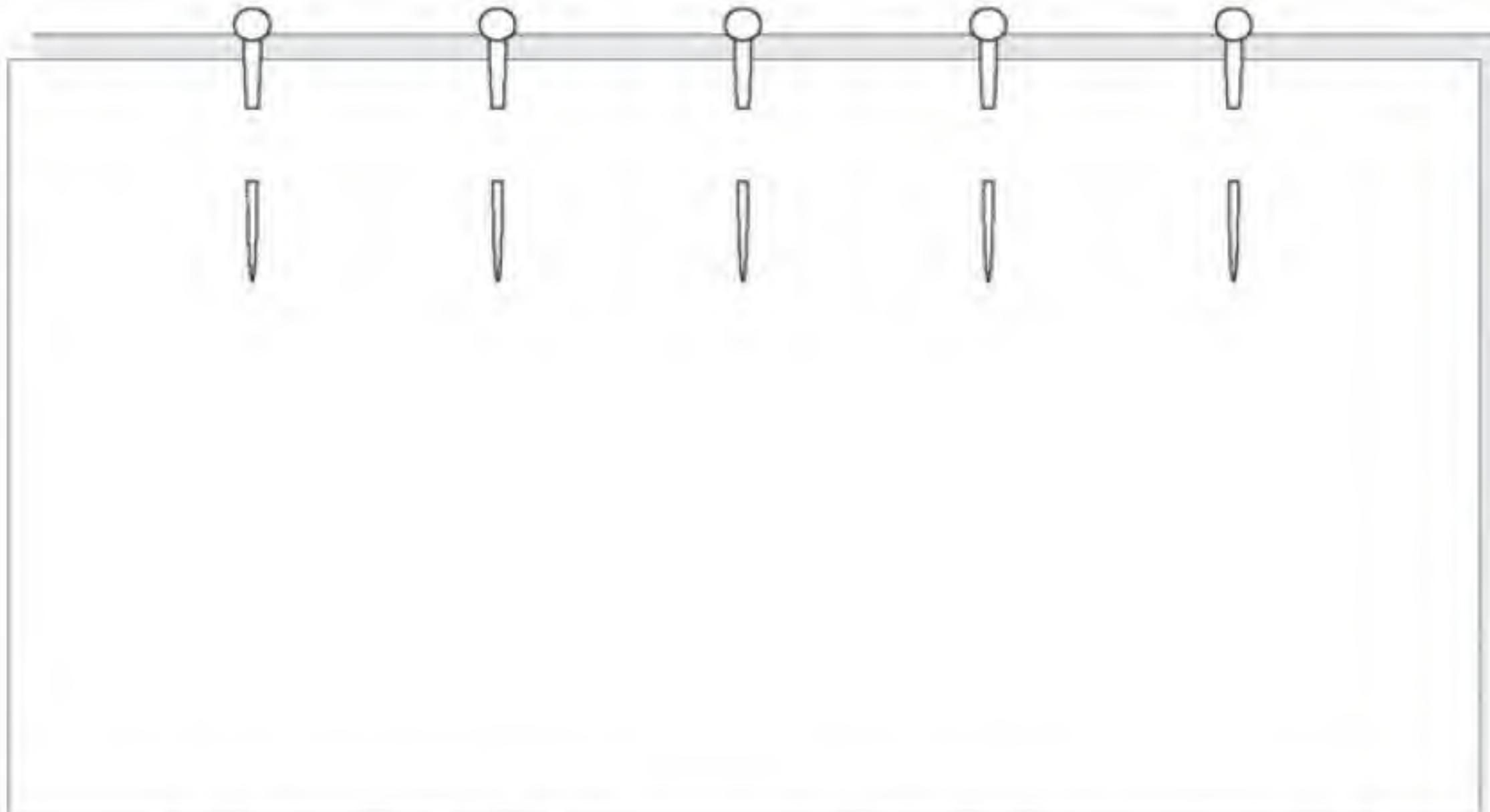
Whether you will be stitching by hand or machine, you need to hold your fabric pieces together firmly in place by pinning and tacking – follow our handy guide to the basic stitches

Preparing your fabric before you stitch does take a little time but it's well worth it in the long run. It saves you from having to unpick mistakes and you'll also get a neater finish. Pin, then tack, then stitch is the golden rule – particularly if you are a beginner.

Although a sewing machine can be used for a lot of projects, some hand stitches are also necessary so it's important to understand these and practice them first.

PINNING

Pins are vital for stopping your fabric moving about while you're sewing. For large projects, insert pins at right angles to the edge of your fabric, about 15cm (6in) apart. For smaller projects, insert your pins much closer together. You should also use more pins if you're securing a curve or corner. Don't use pins with plastic heads if you're going to press your fabric because they may melt, but



you can buy larger glass-headed pins, which are ideal for thicker fabric and you can iron on top of them.

If you are pinning tricky areas, such as curved edges, then place your pin lengthways along the seam line. Always remove the pins as you go if you are

machine stitching as you may bend or snap your needle if you stitch over them.

When pinning hems you can pin in either direction, but if the hem is quite deep then place pins at right angles because it's easier for easing fabric into place using this method.

TACKING

Tacking (also known as basting) is something we often skip as it does take time. Pinning is fine for just straight seams, but if you are working on curves, or joining slippery or stretchy fabrics together, then tacking is well worth the effort. It avoids you having to unpick your seam later, and possibly marking your fabric in the process.

The more you stitch and become confident, the less you will feel the need to tack seams first. Use a contrasting coloured thread for tacking so the stitches can easily be seen when you remove them later.

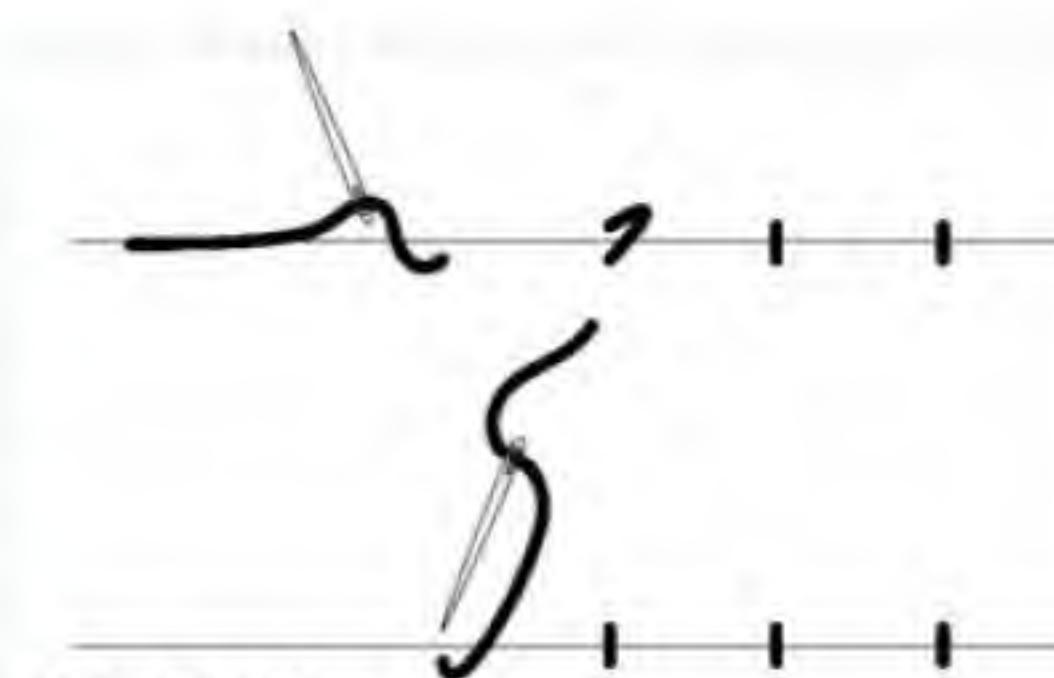


BASIC TACK

Simple tacking stitches are used for holding two pieces of fabric together and making temporary hems. Since the stitches won't be staying in the fabric, you can use a knot to start off. Just use a single thread to make straight stitches, evenly spaced. When you need to remove them, if your fabric is loosely woven, you can just pull the thread. On denser material, cut the thread every few stitches and pull it out of the fabric gently.



DOUBLE STITCH



SLIP STITCH



RUNNING STITCH

HAND STITCHES

For most projects you will need to do some sewing by hand – for example, making hems, stitching trickier areas, or for a little decoration.

DOUBLE STITCH

This is a tidy way to start off without using a knot when you are working any hand stitches or even tacking. Make your first stitch and then stitch over it a couple of times, keeping it as neat as possible. Slide the needle through the stitches on the wrong side for extra security before you start sewing. You can also use double stitch to fasten off when you finish sewing, to secure your thread.

SLIP STITCH

Since this stitch is almost invisible you can use it for hems and to sew on bias binding and appliqué shapes.

It's usually formed by slipping the thread under a fold of fabric and can be used to join two folded edges together, a folded edge to a flat piece of fabric or even two flat pieces of fabric.

Work from right to left. Fasten the thread by taking a couple of stitches where they won't be seen and then bring the needle and thread out through one

folded edge (upper part of illustration). The stitch visible under the fabric will be a long diagonal one.

Next push your needle down through the second fabric, very close to where the first fabric lies, forming a tiny vertical stitch (lower part of illustration). Bring your needle out and draw the thread through. Repeat for each stitch.

RUNNING STITCH

This stitch is similar to tacking and is generally used for decorating a finished project and for gathering fabric.

Simply bring your needle up and down through the fabric at regular intervals to create evenly-spaced stitches. Make sure that all the stitches are the same length and the spaces between them too – this is particularly important if you are using it as an embellishment.

BACKSTITCH

A strong stitch, this is useful for seams that will take a lot of weight. It's also a decorative embroidery stitch.

Working from right to left, bring the needle up through the fabric a stitch length to the left of where you actually want the stitching to start and then take the needle back to the start, through the fabric and up again another stitch length to the left.

BLANKET STITCH

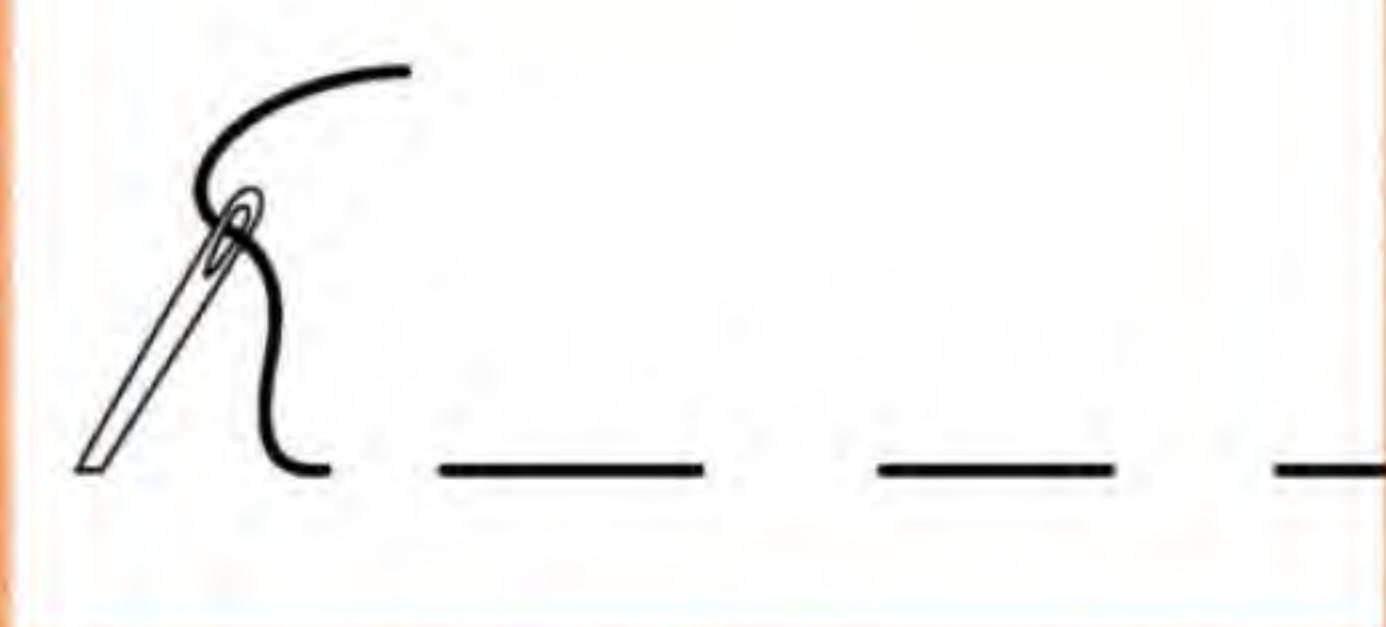
This can be used to edge blankets as well as for stitching appliqué to the base material. Push the needle in a short distance from the edge of the fabric, then, with the thread underneath the needle, pull it through to form a loop. The vertical stitches should be evenly spaced and of the same length.



BACKSTITCH

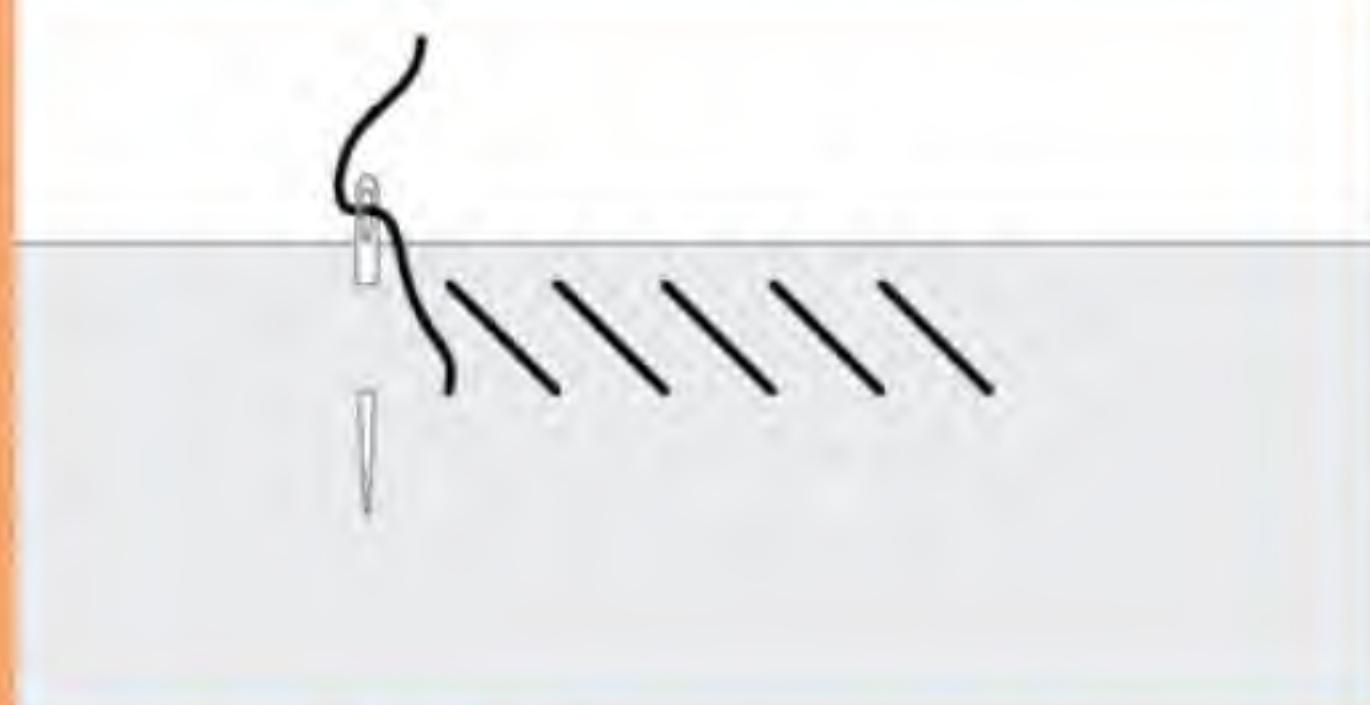


BLANKET STITCH



LONG AND SHORT TACK

This is a neater stitch that's handy when the stitches might be kept in the fabric for a while before removal. Simply create a long version of the basic tack and leave a short space in between each stitch.



DIAGONAL TACK

Diagonal tacks are used on folds or areas where one piece of fabric lies on top of another. The stitches are worked vertically and appear on the right side as diagonal stitches, but are vertical on the wrong side of the fabric.

Padded coat hanger

By Debbie Shore

This pretty coat hanger will look lovely in your closet, and it will help to maintain the shape of your delicate garments

A lovely first project, this padded coat hanger is easy to make with a small amount of fabric and the minimum of sewing. It's ideal for using up scraps of fabric from other projects – before long you might collect a wardrobe full of them, in a cornucopia of textiles that match newly-made garments and accessories. Padded hangers make delightful gifts, especially if lavender or other petals and spices are sprinkled throughout the wadding or a scented sachet in matching fabric is hung from the hook. Of course, they're useful, too – padded hangers protect the shoulders of delicate clothes and stop strappy tops and dresses from falling to the floor.

YOU WILL NEED



- Wooden coat hanger: 40.5cm (16in) across
- Two pieces of fabric: 48x13cm (19x5in)
- Wadding cut into 5cm (2in) strips
- Ribbon for trimming
- Fabric adhesive spray
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

This will match your hanger size

Seam allowance

1.5cm (1/2in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Half Yard Heaven
by Debbie Shore

Fabric left over from sewing projects, or old shirts and pillow cases that aren't yet ready for the scrap heap, come in handy for little projects that don't require a great deal of fabric. In this book you'll find lovely ideas, with full instructions, for making 26 items to wear, use, give away, play with or simply to treasure. Easy to make, they can be completed in a day or a weekend.

Published by Search Press, PB, £9.99
www.searchpress.com



MAKING THE HANGER



1

Lay your two pieces of fabric right sides together. Place the coat hanger on the top part of the fabric so that the hook is approximately 1.5cm (1/2in) in from the edge. Draw around half the hanger, leaving a border of 1.5cm (1/2in).



3

Spray the hanger with fabric adhesive, then wrap the strips of wadding around it. Put an extra square of wadding over the ends of the hanger as shown in next step...



2

Cut out these shapes, then repeat on the lower part of the fabric. You should have four shapes altogether.



4

Place the cut-out pieces right sides together, pin them, then sew all the way round, leaving the short straight end open. Turn the right way out and press. You will now have two matching 'sleeves'. Slip the fabric sleeves over each side of the hanger.



5

Fold in the fabric at the join, then hand stitch the two sleeves together. Don't worry too much about stitching neatly as this will be covered by ribbon.



6

Glue a piece of decorative ribbon over your stitches, and finish off with a little bow. If you like, pop a little fabric adhesive on to the hook and wrap ribbon around it to finish.

All about... SEAMS

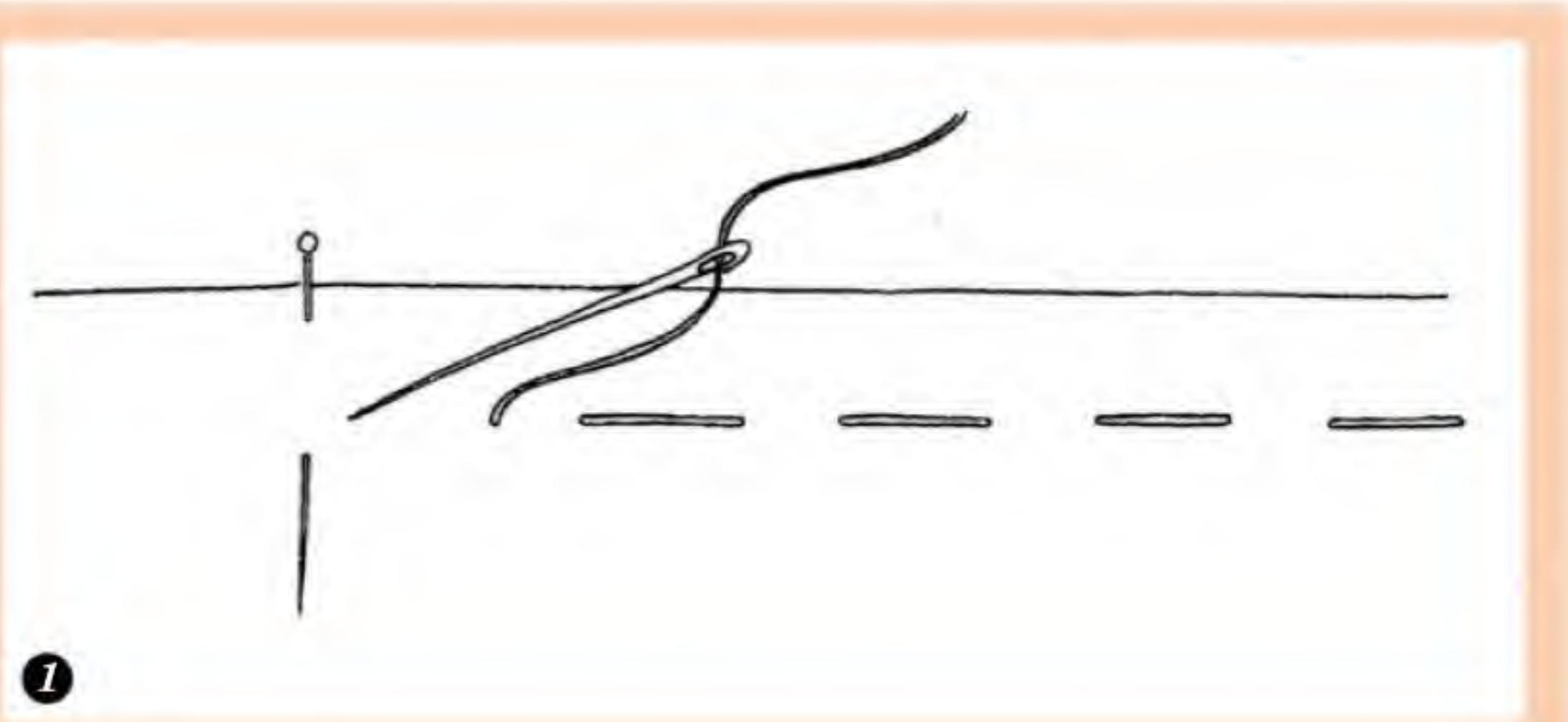
A seam joins two or more layers of fabric together and can be done by hand or machine – most are worked on a machine as they are stronger and quicker to make

Stitching a neat straight seam is the first thing you need to master on your sewing machine. The answer is, of course, practice, practice, practice. A really good way to do this is to draw pencil lines on a spare piece of light cotton fabric. Now stitch along these lines until you can stitch accurately on top of them. Now try the same thing but without the drawn lines and see how you get on.

You could draw seams lines onto your fabric with an air erasable pen then stitch over them until you are confident you can stitch in a straight line.

This is also a good opportunity to check that you have set the tension and the stitch length of your sewing machine correctly to suit the weight and type of fabric you are stitching on or together.

However, taking the time to pin, then tack, will make stitching with your sewing machine a lot easier as you can concentrate on stitching neat seams without the worry of the fabric pieces separating and slipping. It won't be long until stitching seams become second nature and you're off.



HOW TO SEW A FLAT SEAM (PLAIN SEAM)

Put the edges of your fabric together, secure your thread and then sew along the edge, making sure you keep the seam allowance even all the way along (fig. 1).

Sewing machines have lines on the base plate that are standard seam allowance distances from the needle. When stitching, keep the raw edges lined up with the relevant line to keep the size of the seam allowance constant. Insert

the needle in the seam line about 1cm (½in) from the start and reverse stitch back to the start, then stitch forward. When you reach the end of the seam, reverse stitch for about 1cm (½in) again to secure the thread. If you are stitching a continuous seam – for example, round a circle – overlap the start of the stitching by about 1cm (½in). If there are pins in your fabric, take each one out just before you reach it – don't sew over them.

SEAM KNOW-HOW

Once you've mastered basic straight seams, there are other techniques you need to master for the perfect finished seam.

SEAM ALLOWANCES

The seam allowance is the area between the stitching and the raw edge of the fabric. It's important to keep this the same throughout and the individual project instructions will tell you what this is.

To stitch accurately, you must be able to use the correct seam allowance without having to mark it

on the fabric. Most sewing machines have seam allowance lines on the needle plate. All you do is line the raw edge of your fabric up with your chosen line then lower the foot and stitch your seam.

Common seam allowances are 6mm (¼in) for patchwork, 1.5cm (½in) for general sewing and 1.6cm (½in) for dressmaking.

REINFORCING SEAMS

Some seams, such as bag seams, can be reinforced to strengthen them. After you have worked the main seam, work another one 3mm (¼in) in towards the raw edges from the first one.

LAYERING SEAMS

If you are stitching together thick fabric, or several layers of fabrics, then you need to reduce the bulk of fabric in the seam allowance.

This is done by trimming the raw edges of each fabric by different amounts after the seam has been stitched. Always trim the seam allowances of piping as they will be particularly bulky otherwise.

TRIMMING SEAMS

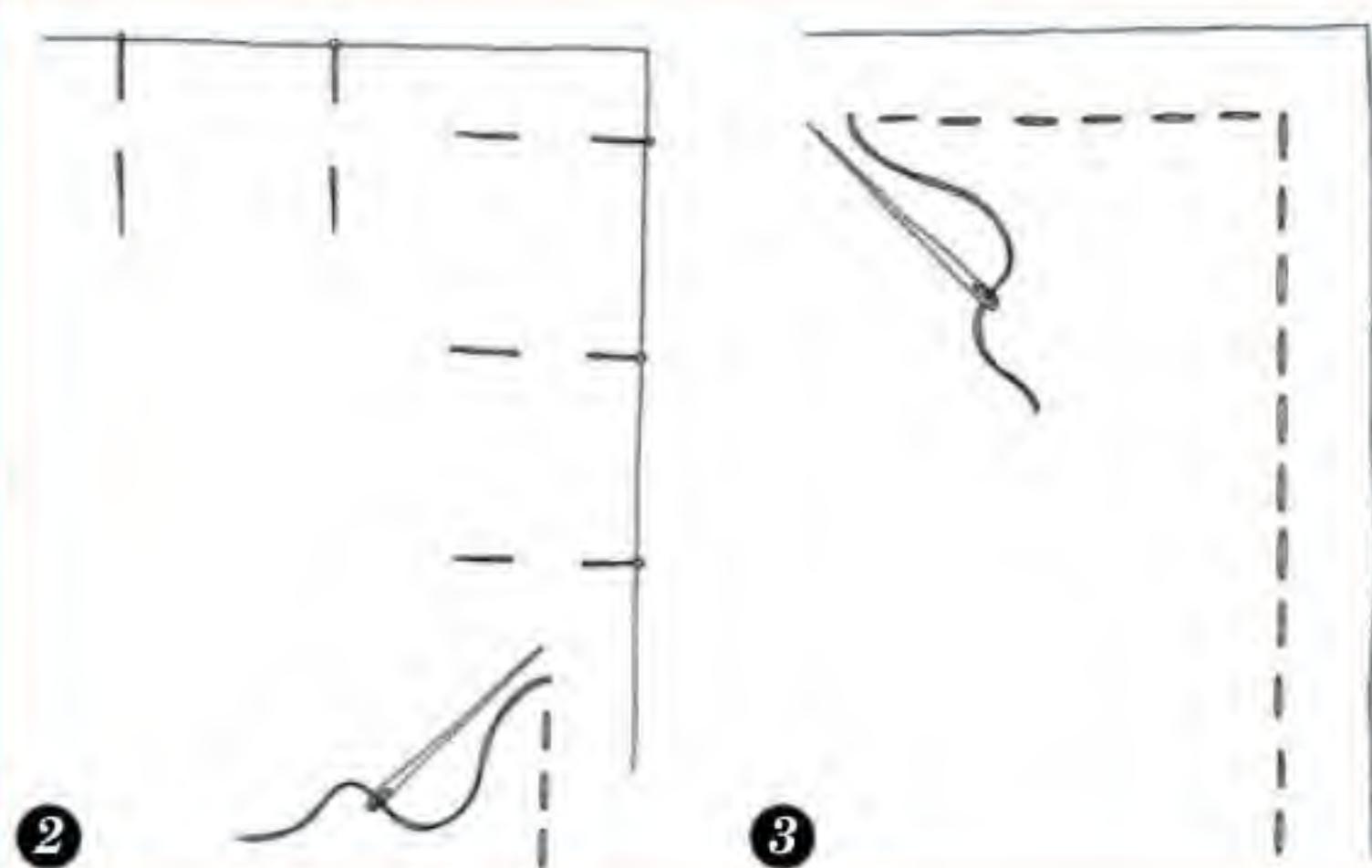
Once you have finished your seam, it's best to press the seam open on the wrong side so it lies flat. The project instructions will tell you if you should



HOW TO SEW CORNERS

1 Pin the fabric together, with right sides facing, and then stitch the seam (fig. 2).

2 The stitching lines are at right angles to each other (fig. 3), which means the finished corner will have a sharp point when turned to the right side. To reinforce your corner, stitch right to the edge on both sides.



HOW TO SEW AN INNER CURVE

1 Place right sides of fabric together.

2 Sew a seam, ensuring the sewing line follows the curve at the distance from the edge for the seam allowance, as set in the project instructions (fig. 4).

3 You'll need to reduce the bulk so the curve lies flat, so cut out notches (fig. 5). On extreme curves and angles, cut small wedges out of the seam allowance to reduce the bulk further.

4 Turn right sides out and press.



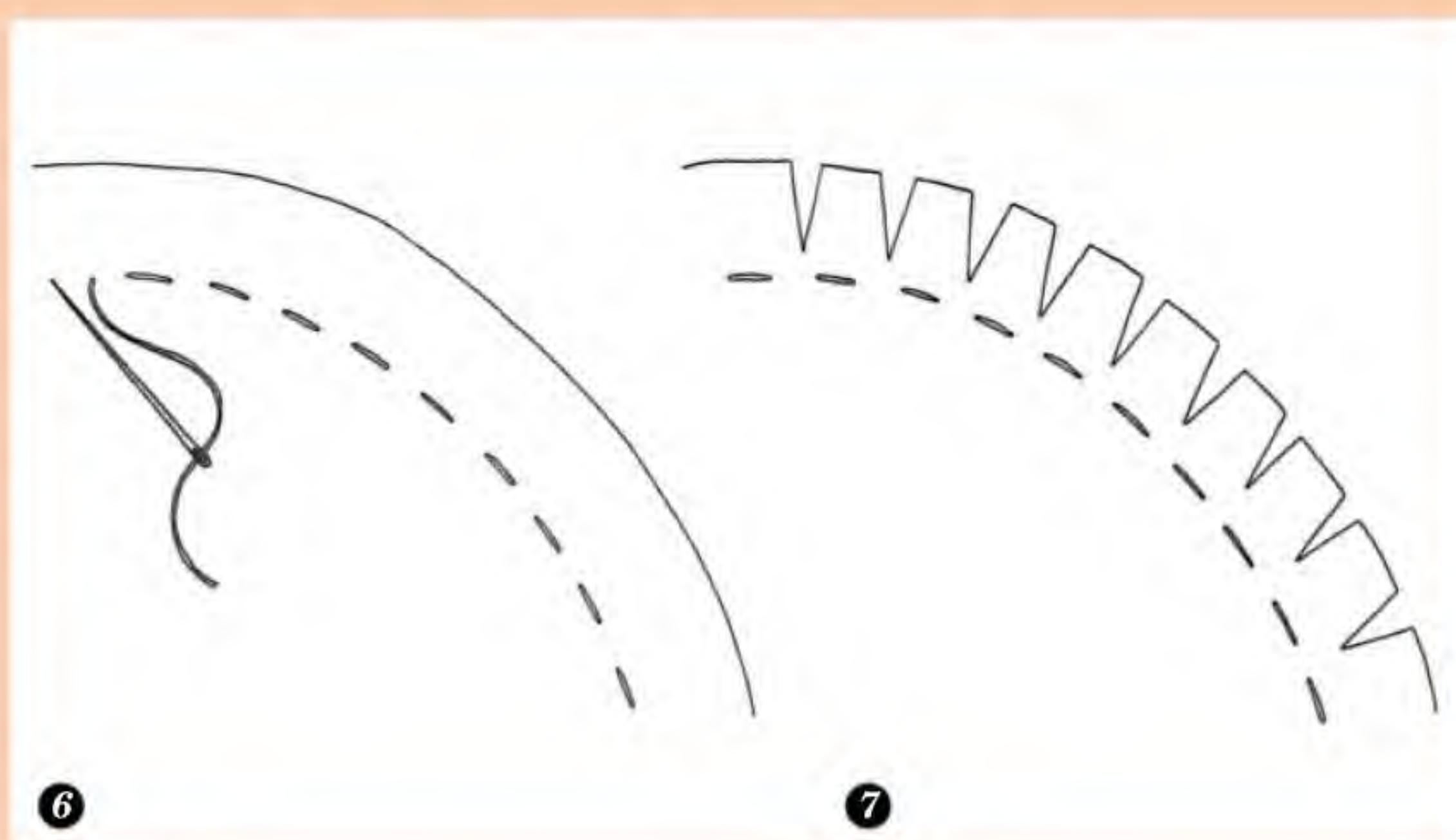
HOW TO SEW AN OUTER CURVE

1 Place right sides of fabric together and stitch the seam.

2 Ensure the sewing line follows the curve at the distance from the edge for the seam allowance, as set in the project instructions (fig. 6).

3 Cut notches in the seam allowance to reduce the bulk of the seam (fig. 7). You need to do this so that the fabric can be turned to the right side.

4 Turn right sides out and press.



press the seams to one side instead. This is done quite often in patchwork.

Usually the seams allowances are left as they are as they do help to strengthen the seam but sometimes they cause too much bulk so they can be trimmed to half their original width.

NEATENING EDGES

If your fabric has a tendency to fray you can neaten the raw edges after you have worked the seam.

Set your sewing machine to the zigzag stitch, then stitch close to the raw edge all the way along. The zigzag must be small enough to stop the fabric from fraying, but large

enough to enclose the bulk of the fabric so practise a few stitch lengths and widths before you begin.

Alternatively, you can trim the raw fabric edges with a pair of pinking shears, which gives a zigzag edge.

NARROW SEAM

This seam is ideal for sheer or more delicate fabrics as it is a little neater and stands out less than a flat seam.

Stitch a flat seam in the usual way, then trim both seam allowances to half their original width. Zigzag stitch the two raw edges together, then open out the fabric and press the seams to one side.

Top tip
Always use sharp
dressmaking scissors
for trimming seams
for a crisp finish –
cut slowly and
carefully

Crazy patchwork bunting

By Debbie Shore

This is a good way of using up scraps of fabric to create a bright, fun decoration to add cheerfulness to your home

Bunting is hugely popular right now, and it's not just for festive occasions. It looks fantastic hung in any room, whether kitchen, bedroom, nursery or lounge. Don't stop there, though – bright bunting adds a special touch to gardens, too.

The process is simple: cut some triangles (as many as you want, depending on the length you need) and stitch them in a row to bias binding tape. Our bunting uses a patchwork technique, but you could cut out single-pieced triangles to save time.

Bunting is a good way of using up scraps of fabric, but can be made from other materials too – oilcloth is a good choice for the garden and can be glued instead of stitched, and how about leather for a den or home office?

YOU WILL NEED

- 72 strips of fabric: 15x5cm (6x2in)
- Contrasting fabric for backing: 100x20.5cm (40x8in), cut into 12 triangles each 15cm (6in) across wide x 20.5cm (8in) tall
- Bias binding tape: 3m (10ft) x 2.5cm (1in) wide
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

2m (80in) long x 17.5cm (7in) tall

Seam allowance

1.5cm (1/2in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Sew Bunting
by Debbie Shore

A book with nothing but bunting projects – what a great idea! You'll never be stuck for ideas for bunting for any occasion, whether it's a birthday party, a wedding or a royal jubilee. There are nearly 30 projects, some seasonally-themed, others simply celebrating the joy of bunting! We love the bunting made of lavender-scented sachets, and the bunting-adorned lampshade!

Published by Search Press, PB, £9.99
www.searchpress.com



2

MAKING THE BUNTING

1

Place two strips of fabric right sides together, twist slightly and sew them together along one edge.

2

Fold back the fabric and press open.

Top tip

If you have embroidery stitches on your sewing machine, you could add a few pretty stitches to the seams before cutting out



3



4



5

3

Place the next piece of fabric face down on one of the joined strips and twist it in the opposite direction. Sew along the edge as before. Your fabric strips should be taking on a zigzag look.

4

Fold back the fabric and press open as before. Join five strips together in this way until you have a rectangle approx 15x20.5cm (6x8in).

5

Mark the centre point on one of the 15cm (6in) sides and cut from here to the two corners of the facing side to make a triangle.



6



7

6

Take each triangle and place it on top of a piece of backing fabric, right sides together. Sew along the two long sides using a 6mm (1/4in) seam allowance. Snip across the corners.

7

Turn right side out and press. Trim away any untidy edges across the top.



Top tip
If the bunting is for a special occasion, add excitement by sticking on embellishments

FINISHING THE BUNTING

1 PREPARE THE BIAS BINDING

Fold your bias tape in half lengthwise and press.

2 PLACE THE TRIANGLES

Starting at the centre point, slip the triangles inside the bias tape, leaving a gap of 5cm (2in) between each one. Pin them in place as you go.

3 STITCH IT ALL TOGETHER

Machine stitch all the way along the bias tape, trapping the triangles as you sew.



Retro-style peg bag

By Chris Jefferys

Jazz up laundry days with this checked peg bag. It's pretty & practical, and is a great way to flex your new sewing skills!

This handy little peg bag is just the thing for hanging on your washing line to keep pegs safe and sound. Peg bags are enjoying a come back, and you can personalise this one easily by picking a patterned fabric that tickles your fancy to make the basic bag from. Opt for a pastel gingham pattern to give your bag a vintage feel or pick a bold floral print to make sure your finished creation stands out on the line when friends pop round for a cuppa.

Our finished peg bag has a stylish rounded opening at the front (ready for you to pop your pegs in), finished with a simple bound edge. Hang it in pride of place in your garden or laundry room with a wooden coat hanger, slipped inside the top edges, to suspend it from a door hook or washing line. This is quite a quick project, so you should be able to whip it up in just a couple of evenings.

YOU WILL NEED

- Fabric: 100x115cm (40x45in)
- Wooden coat hanger
- Pattern paper
- Pencil and ruler
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

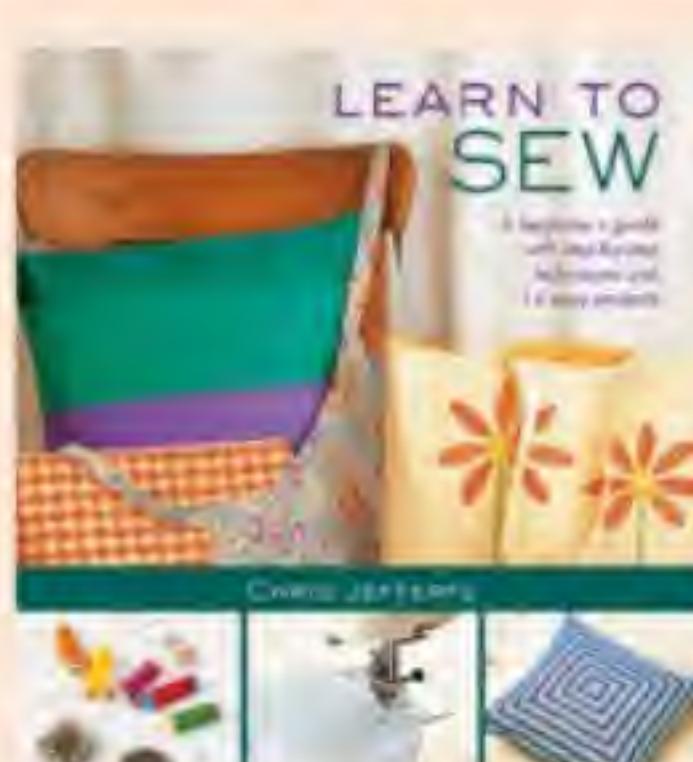
To match hanger size

Seam allowance

2 cm (3/4in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Learn to Sew
by Chris Jefferys

This easy peg bag is a taster of just one of 14 must-try beginners' sewing projects in *Learn to Sew*. From eye-catching tablecloths to cushion covers, aprons and curtains, you'll find loads of projects to play with, alongside step-by-step tutorials for an array of techniques, from seams to fastenings and mitred corners. Plus learn how to add pretty finishing touches like bows, ties and frills.

Published by New Holland

www.newhollandpublishers.com





CUTTING OUT YOUR FABRIC

1 MAKE THE PEG BAG PATTERN

Lay a coat hanger onto some paper, draw around it, then mark the centre. Add an extra 2cm (¾in) above the top and down either side. Draw a 50cm (19¾in) base edge down from each side, and join along the bottom with a horizontal line. Cut out two fabric pieces from this pattern – one each for the front and back.

2 CUT THE FACING

For the inner line, draw a circular central opening onto the bag pattern about 28cm (11in) down from the central point at the top edge, and about 19cm (7½in) wide. For the outer edge, draw a line 4cm (1½in) outside this opening. Trace the pattern and cut it out from the fabric, then transfer the inner line to the bag front fabric and cut it out.



SEWING THE BAG

1

Zigzag stitch around the outer edge of the facing to neaten. Place the facing to the opening with right sides together, and stitch in place around the opening, taking a 1cm (½in) seam allowance. Snip and notch the seam allowances around the curves and press the facing over to the wrong side. Top stitch around the facing 1cm (½in) in from the edge.

2

Place the front piece to the back piece with right sides facing and outer edges level. Stitch together around the outer edges. Notch the seam at the curves and trim the corners. Turn the bag right side out and press the seam to the edge. Slip the coat hanger inside the top edge to hang the peg bag.

NOW TRY A BOUND EDGE

Bias binding is an alternative way to bind the opening of your peg bag. It'll give you a neat contrast outline around your bag's rounded front opening. As bias binding is always cut on the bias, it should mould easily to sit smoothly around the curves. The binding shown above was first machine-stitched to the right side, then the other edge was folded over to the wrong side and hand-stitched in place.



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All about... HEMS

Hems finish projects off perfectly with a neat folded edge – they can be sewn by hand or machine, but hand sewing gives a nearly-invisible finish

Once you have learnt how to sew a seam on your sewing machine or by hand, then the next thing you need to learn is how to stitch a hem. They are crucial for finishing the edges of many projects neatly and there are several ways of doing this.

Your hem is nearly always stitched last after you have done all the other sewing, so remember to get everything else finished first. One of the few exceptions to this is when you are hemming a piece of fabric that you are going to embroider or appliquéd. It's best to hem this first to stop it fraying while you are working on the rest of the fabric.

When you are deciding which order to make an item in, just think logically through the process and try to avoid any fabric fraying while you are working on it or you may lose valuable edges.

DOUBLE HEMS: HEM DEPTH

First you need to decide how deep you want your hem to be. This will depend on the weight of fabric you are using and the finish you want to create.



If you are using lightweight fabrics, such as thin cotton, then a narrow hem will work well, but for thicker fabrics that don't fold so easily make a deeper hem.

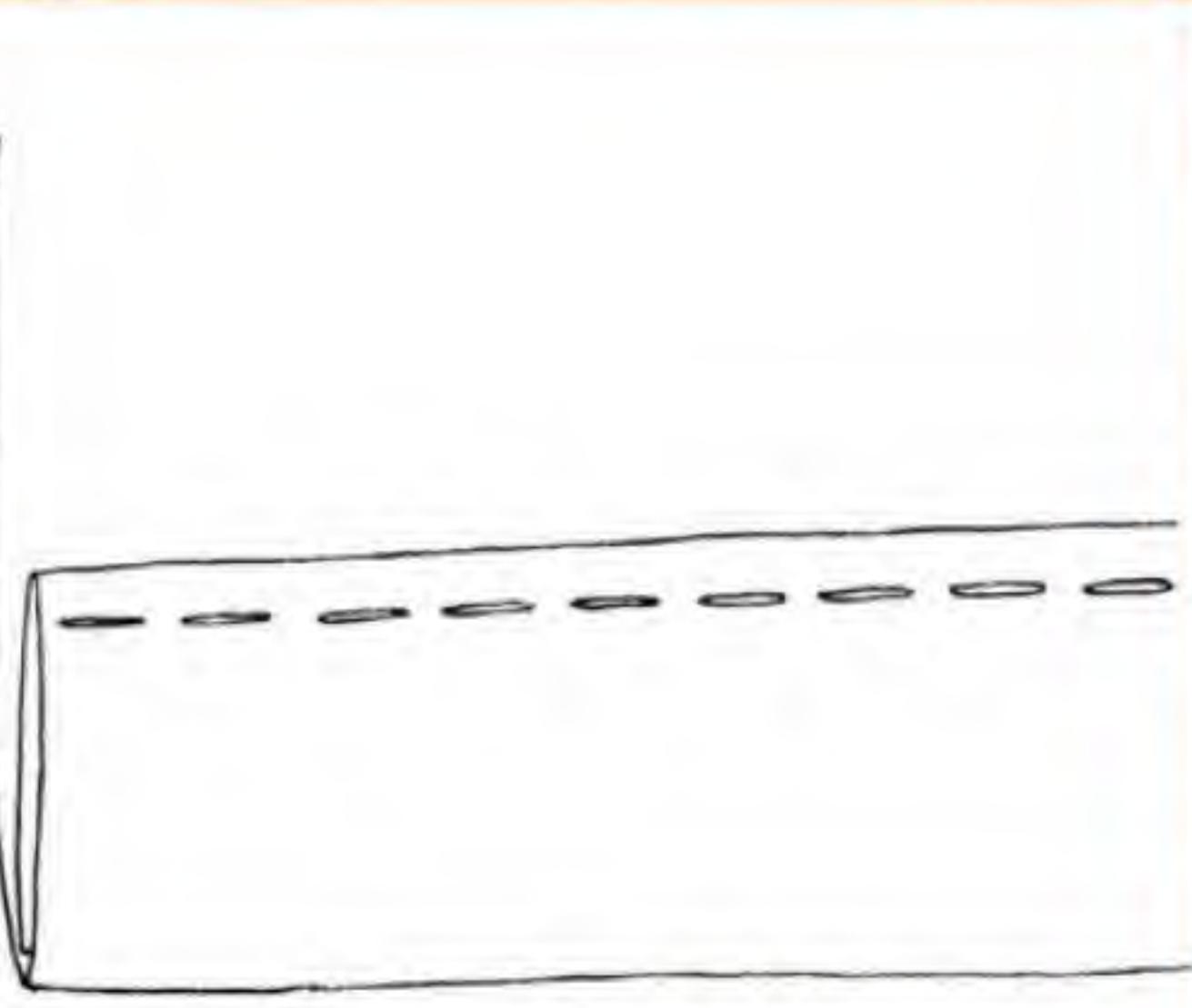
Some fabrics look good with a deep hem as this becomes a feature of the finished article – for example, if you are hemming a fleece blanket then a nice deep hem will

give it a softer rounded edge. For most cotton fabrics a 1.5cm (1/2in) hem works well as it gives the fabric a good stable edge without being too dominant. But, if you are hemming a more delicate item, such as a handkerchief or fine napkin, then make a 6mm (1/4in) hem. This is a little more fiddly to do but looks good.

HEM STYLES

A REALLY SIMPLE HEM

If you want to make a very basic hem, simply work a machine zigzag along the edge of your fabric to stop it from fraying. Turn this edge over to the wrong side to the depth you want your hem to be and machine stitch into place. This doesn't look as neat as a double-folded hem, but is ideal for a quick finish or for items that won't have too much handling.



MACHINE-STITCHED HEMS

These are worked in exactly the same way as the hand-stitched hem. Make your first and second turn, then machine stitch the fabric down close to the folded-over edge and not the edge of the garment, to be sure you catch all the turnings in your stitching. This is particularly important if your first turn is narrower than your second turn. It's always best to stitch from the wrong side so you can follow the fold with your needle. Make sure you stitch slowly so you achieve a nice neat stitch line.



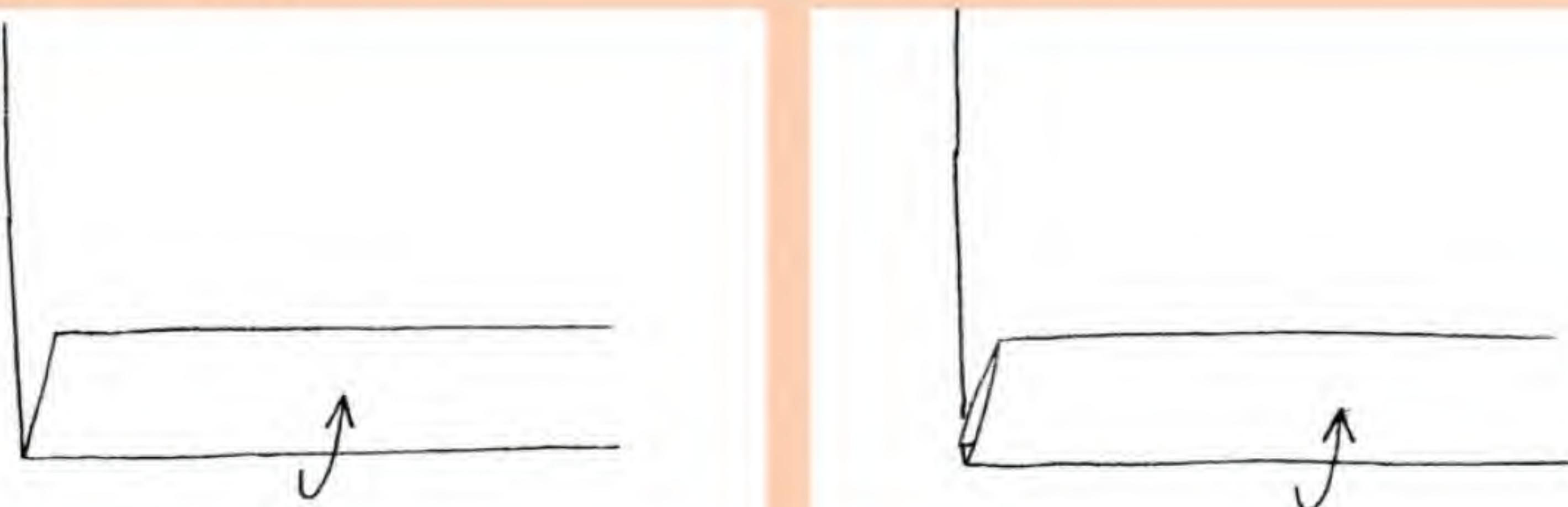
HAND-STITCHED HEMS

The same method is used however deep you decide your hem is going to be.

1 Decide the depth of your hem and turn the fabric over that amount to the wrong side – for example if you want a 1.5cm (1/2in) finished hem, turn the fabric edge 1.5cm (1/2in) and press.

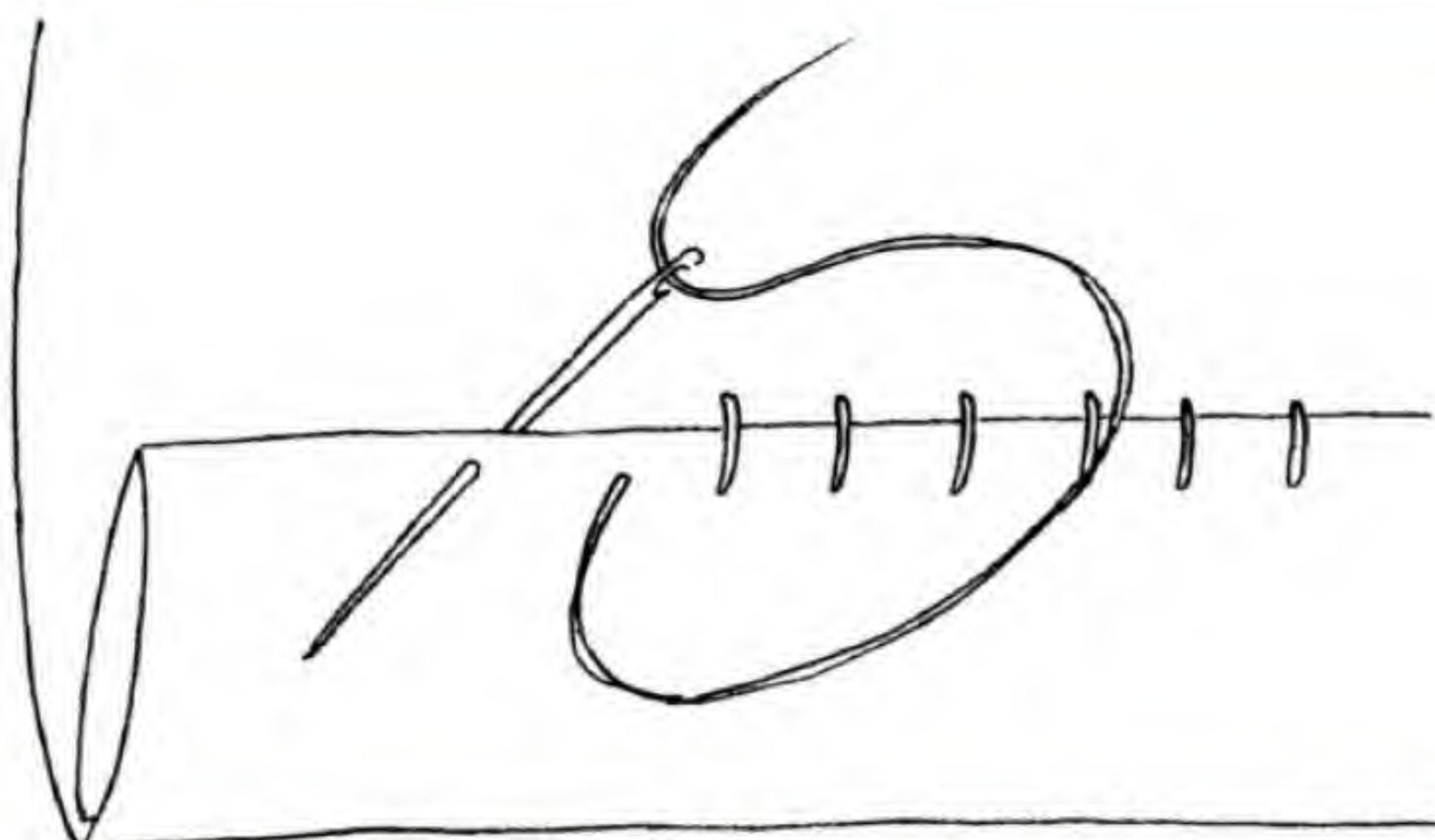
2 Now press your fabric over by the same amount again and press, then pin and tack into place.

3 Stitch your hem into place using a neat hemming stitch. Remember to use a thread that matches your fabric so the stitches won't be seen.



HOW TO WORK HEMMING STITCH

- Secure the end of your thread by working a few tiny stitches over and over each other.
- Take a small stitch into the edge of the folded-over fabric of the hem.
- Now make a small stitch into the main fabric just above the first stitch.
- Push your needle into the edge of the hem about 6mm (1/4in) ahead of the first stitch then repeat this process all the way along the hem.



CURVED HEMS

If you are hemming a curved edge of fabric, such as a round tablecloth or an apron (as illustrated), then make the hem quite narrow, because the fabric is fuller at the edge than it is towards the inside of the fabric. When you turn to make the first and second turn, take care to press well each time and this should help to ease the fullness into the hem. It also helps to clip the fabric slightly.

Top tip

To reduce the bulk on a deep hem of 2.5cm (1in) or more you only need to turn the fabric over 6mm (1/4in) for the first turn then 2.5cm (1in) for the second.



Classy café napkins

By Susan Wasinger

Recycle old shirts into a set of trendy napkins – the detailing in the stitching and tailoring adds stylish charm and pizzazz

These petite napkins are perfect for catching your morning croissant crumbs or keeping you civilised over a light lunch. They cleverly 'borrow' the buttons and buttonholes from a recycled shirt to make napkin rings that are built in.

One large shirt should provide enough for four napkins, and a fabulous effect is gained from mixing and matching the fabric from two shirts – make the main part with one and the contrasting part from another.

If you haven't got any old shirts lying around your wardrobe waiting to be upcycled (or you can't persuade anyone to give theirs up!), markets and second-hand shops are the perfect place to find them. As long as the fabric is in good condition, they'll do just nicely.

We've made ours using men's shirts, but look for women's blouses, too – pretty floral prints will make lovely summer napkins.

YOU WILL NEED



- Bits and pieces of four men's extra-large, long-sleeve, button-down shirts
- Threads in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

30cm (12in) square

Seam allowance

1.5cm (1/2in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Sewn by Hand

By Susan Wasinger

Anything homemade has a unique character, and is special to a gift recipient because it's obvious how much love, effort and attention has gone into its making. In this book, you'll find more than 20 projects to hand stitch, each one a modern take on a traditional theme. Find pillows, aprons, pincushions, totes and lots of other pretty things for treasuring and gift-giving.

Published by Lark Books, PB, £16.99

www.thegmgroup.com





Top tip
There's lots of fancy
stitching and fabric
in a shirt – these
napkins let you give
it a new lease
of life!

MAKING THE NAPKINS

1

Cut squares of fabric from the back and sleeves of the shirts. You should be able to cut two 36cm (14in) squares out of the back and one out of each sleeve.

2

Cut the button placket off another shirt (fig. 1). Cut along the straight of the grain close to the folded edge. On a tightly woven shirt, you can cut close to the folded edge and leave it raw. If it's a looser weave that might fray, cut about 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in) from the fold, then tease a couple of threads off to create a little fray. As long as it is on the straight of the grain, the fray will be stable and look great.

3

For the tab, cut the placket so that there is about 2.5cm (1in) of length below a buttonhole, and about 10-13cm (4-5in) above the buttonhole. Hem the short end (closest to the buttonhole) by folding it up 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in), then 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) again. Stitch to hem.



2



3

4

Now move onto the napkins. Hem the perimeter of the napkin by rolling the edge under 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) once, then 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) again. Pin to hold. If you like, iron the folded edges to hold them in place while you sew. Stitch a tight and even running stitch around the perimeter of the napkin. Stop stitching at the half-way point on the last side, but leave your needle threaded. Now is the time to mark the position for the tab.

5

To mark the tab position, fold the napkin in half along the napkin edge you left partially open. Mark the centre. Then measure between the centre and the edge, and mark the centre of that area. Your tab will centre on that mark.

6

Tuck the unhemmed end of the tab under the rolled edge of the napkin at the marked point with wrong sides facing. Pin (fig. 2). Test the length of the tab by rolling up the napkin and wrapping the tab around it. The buttonhole on the tab should be tangent to the edge napkin hem without rolling it too loosely or too tightly. If the tab is a bit long, cut some length off the end that is currently tucked into the napkin hem. Use the needle and thread from step 4 to finish the napkin hem, sewing the tab into place as you stitch.

7

Turn the tab up and stitch across it along the napkin hem about 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in) from the edge (fig. 3). Now remove a button from the shirt placket and sew it onto the right side of the napkin. Position it on the hem, centred on the tab. This napkin is ready to roll!



All about... BINDING A FABRIC EDGE

Binding the edges of your projects with a strip of fabric creates neat edges that won't fray or distort – the binding can even be a decorative feature of the finished article

Learning how to bind the edge of a piece of fabric or layers of fabric is a really useful skill. It's great for finishing off the edges of napkins, tablecloths, tea towels, bags, purses, quilts or anything where you want a neat strong edge. Instead of just hemming your fabric you can use a contrasting fabric to make an item look extra special.

You can make your own binding to edge your fabric, which is the method used on the Bound Napkins project on p46. Alternatively, you can buy ready-made bias binding which is used to bind the Vagabond Bag on p50.

There are several methods of binding fabric and the single fold method is used for the Bound Napkins project (p46).

DOUBLE FOLD METHOD

Another method is the double fold method, which will give you neat mitred corners too using really simple steps. Also, with the double fold of fabric on the edge you get a good strong finish which is ideal for any items which will have a lot of wear and washing.

NB In these photographs we have shown the stitching in a contrasting thread so it shows up. When you bind your fabric remember to use a thread that matches it as closely as possible.

HOW TO BIND

CUTTING STRIPS

First, start off by cutting the strips to bind the edge of your fabric.

Width: A 1.5cm (½in) finished binding is wide enough for most items and will fold well on the mitred corners. You need to cut fabric strips of 6cm (2¼in) wide to achieve this. But, if your fabric is thick or if there are several layers, then add an extra 6mm (¼in) to this width.

Length: Measure all round the edge of your fabric to be bound and add 30cm (12in) to allow for mitres and ends.

JOINING STRIPS

The fabric strips all need to be joined on the diagonal to make one long strip. Place one strip right side up vertically and lay

the next strip right side down horizontally on top at right angles.

Draw a diagonal pencil line from the top left corner to the bottom right corner and pin together. Stitch along this line, and then repeat this process to join all your strips together.

TRIMMING THE SEAM

Now trim all the seams to 6mm (¼in), open out and press flat.

FOLDING THE STRIP

Fold your joined strip in half lengthways, wrong sides together. Match raw edges and press in half along the entire length.

ATTACHING THE STRIP

Fold one short edge of the strip over by 1.5cm (½in), then pin it to the centre of the lower edge of the fabric being bound, as this is usually the least noticeable place for the ends to be seen. Make sure you keep the raw edges of the folded fabric strip even with the fabric to be bound and stitch together along the edge using a 6mm (¼in) seam allowance. Stop when you get to 6mm (¼in) from the end of the fabric being bound and stitch backwards to secure, then cut and remove it from the machine.

MITRING THE CORNER

Fold the fabric strip upwards so the raw edges run in a straight line with the edge of the fabric being bound.



CUT THE STRIPS



JOIN THE STRIPS

Top tip
If your binding is to be stitched round a curve, cut the strips diagonally at 45° to the selvedge



TRIM AND PRESS THE SEAM



FOLD THE STRIP



FOLD TO MITRE CORNERS



ATTACH THE STRIP



STITCH MITRED CORNERS

Fold the strip back down so the fold is running level with the top of the bound fabric and the raw edges of the strip running level down the bound fabric. Starting at the top of the folded-over strip, stitch down using a 6mm (1/4in) seam allowance, stitching backwards for a little way at the top to secure. Continue stitching down the strip over the folds. Mitre each corner in the same way.

FINISHING THE END

When you reach the folded over edge where you started simply stitch the end of the

strip on top of it, overlapping it by 1.5cm (1/2in). Cut off any excess. Ensure you stitch over the stitches at the beginning and stitch backwards to secure.

FINISHING YOUR BINDING

Fold the binding strip over to the wrong side of the bound fabric and press. When you get to the corners, fold them over and mitre them.

Sew the back of the folded strip to the bound fabric and cover the machine stitches. You can do this by hand slip stitching, or, if you prefer, you can

machine stitch this down for a stronger finish. However, you will see the stitches if you have used a machine, so it depends on the look you want.

READY-MADE BIAS BINDING

Shop-bought binding is sold in a variety of widths and lengths. It's easy to use as the cutting into strips and folding have already been done, so all you have to do is pin, tack and stitch.

The variety of colours and patterns available makes it a great way to add decoration to edges and hems.

It's cut on the bias, so it will curve round edges easily. The binding comes pre-folded so all you need to do is fold it over the edges of your fabric, making sure the fabric is tucked right inside, then machine stitch it into place.

You must take care that the back of the binding is stitched in place as well as the front. If you tack the binding onto the fabric before you begin then this will really help to keep it still.



FINISH THE END



FOLD AND STITCH THE BINDING



A NICE NEAT EDGE



READY-MADE BIAS BINDING



Pretty bound napkin

By Cheryl Owen

Make every meal an occasion with these bordered napkins. A few strips of fabric and you're ready for a transformation!

Sewing a border can take just a few minutes once you've mastered the technique, so it's a brilliant way to quickly jazz up your table linen – although for this project we're also making the main part of the napkins for a personal finish!

Whether you choose to make the whole napkin or just the border, you'll want a relatively hardwearing fabric as these items are likely to see plenty of use (and washing). Why not choose something in a colour that matches your crockery?

Given that most table linen – napkins, runners, table cloths – has straight edges, it's possible to create a full set of matching linen, either from scratch or by adding a border to a shop-bought set. It's a lovely idea as a gift, perhaps for a friend who's moved house or maybe even a wedding present.

YOU WILL NEED

- One piece of fabric for main part: 40cm (15¾in) square
- Fabric for binding: 20x112cm (8x44in)
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

40cm (15¾in) square

Seam allowance

2cm (¾in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Love... Sewing
By Cheryl Owen

By following the projects in *Love... Sewing* you'll be able to fill your home with beautiful creations. With 25 patterns for everything from table runners to doorstops, the book is an invaluable guide for anyone taking their first steps in making their own soft furnishings. Step-by-step instructions mean you can transform your home in no time!

Published by New Holland, PB, £12.99
www.newhollandpublishers.com





1



2



3

MAKING THE NAPKIN

1

Cut two 82cm (32 $\frac{3}{4}$ in) straight strips of 8cm (3in) wide fabric for the binding. With right sides facing, join the lengths, taking 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) seam allowance to make a continuous length. Press the seam open. Press the binding lengthwise in half. Open out the binding and press the long edges to meet at the centre (fig. 1).

2

Open out the binding at one end and press under 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in). With the right sides facing and starting halfway along one edge of the napkin, pin and stitch the binding to the napkin, taking a 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) seam allowance. Stitch along the fold line, finishing 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) from the adjacent edge (fig. 2).

3

With wrong sides facing, fold the binding at a 45° angle from the corner (fig. 3). Next, fold the binding level with the stitched raw edges to lie along the adjacent edge of the napkin.



4

Mark the end of the previous stitching with a pin and stitch from this mark, finishing 2cm (3/4in) from the next adjacent edge (fig 4). Continue all the way around the napkin, overlapping the pressed end of the binding.

5

Press the binding outwards from the napkin then turn it to the underside along the centre fold line (fig. 5).

6

Pin the binding to the underside, folding under the fullness at the corners in a neat mitre. Slipstitch the pressed edges along the seams (fig. 6). Now all you need to do is to lay the table!



Summer vagabond bag

By Lola Nova

Make this simple bag and practise your bias binding at the same time – it's perfect for shopping and projects

The vagabond bag is the perfect travelling companion, whether you're shopping in the bazaars of Morocco, perusing the flea markets of Paris, carrying beach essentials in Greece, or making a trip to your local farmers' market. Its unique design allows it to fold up nice and tidy for packing, and opens up with pleated sides that add extra room for all of your treasures.

The construction is straightforward – just cut a simple shape and sew the bias binding on the edges. Our step-by-step instructions will guide you all the way if you get stuck.

Before you know it, you'll be skipping along with a trendy shopping bag, looking for goodies to fill it with!

YOU WILL NEED

- Fabric for outer bag: 50x114cm (20x45in)
- Fabric for lining: same size as outer bag
- Single-fold bias binding: 2.75m (3yds), 25mm (1in) wide
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

48x38cm (19x15in)

Seam allowance

1cm (3/8in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Simple Sewing with Lola Nova
by Alexandra Smith

As the title suggests, everything in this collection of 25 projects, beautifully photographed by Yuki Sugiura, is designed to be easy to make and the emphasis is on having fun while doing so. Chapters are arranged into Boho, Natural, Vintage, Eclectic and Whimsy, and you'll find step-by-step instructions for each of the projects, including things to wear and things for the home.

Published by Mitchell Beazley, HB, £16.99

www.octopusbooks.co.uk



CUTTING OUT THE PATTERN PIECES

Fold your main fabric in half widthways, matching the selvedge edges, right sides together. Press it flat to make the fold hold its shape.

Using the fold as the shorter top edge of the bag, cut a rectangle 40cm wide x 50cm long (15¾ x 19¾ in).

Keep your fabric folded and all raw edges aligned.

To create the handles and opening of the bag, follow the dimensions on the template to draw paper patterns.

Pin the templates along the top fold of the bag as shown above (fig. 1).

Place the large bag opening pattern piece in the centre and pin in place (this will be the opening in the bag), then place the two bag handle pattern pieces at the side edges along the fold and pin in place.

Now cut out the pattern pieces (fig. 2). Repeat for the lining fabric. Save the large cut-outs from the bag opening pattern piece – these will become the bag's inside pocket.

SEWING THE INSIDE POCKET

Using the cut-out piece from the outer bag, fold with wrong sides together and pin.

Stitch around all the raw edges using a 5mm (¼ in) seam allowance, leaving a 5cm (2 in) opening for turning. Cut the seam allowance at the corners and clip the curves, then turn right side out (fig. 3). Turn under the seam allowance at the opening and press.

Pin the pocket to the right side of the lining (fig. 4). Centre it about 10cm (4 in) below the bag's large opening, then top-stitch close to the edge around the sides and bottom of the pocket, making sure to back-stitch at both ends of your stitching line.

TIP If you would like a sturdier pocket, use the cut-out lining piece as interfacing for your pocket.



5



6

SEWING THE BAG

With right sides facing and matching the raw edges, pin the sides of your outer bag in place. Stitch along the sides of the bag, using a 1cm (3/8in) seam allowance. Repeat for the lining. Press open the seam allowances.

Turn the outer bag right sides out. Place the lining wrong side out into the outer bag, matching the seams and raw edges, and pin everything into place.

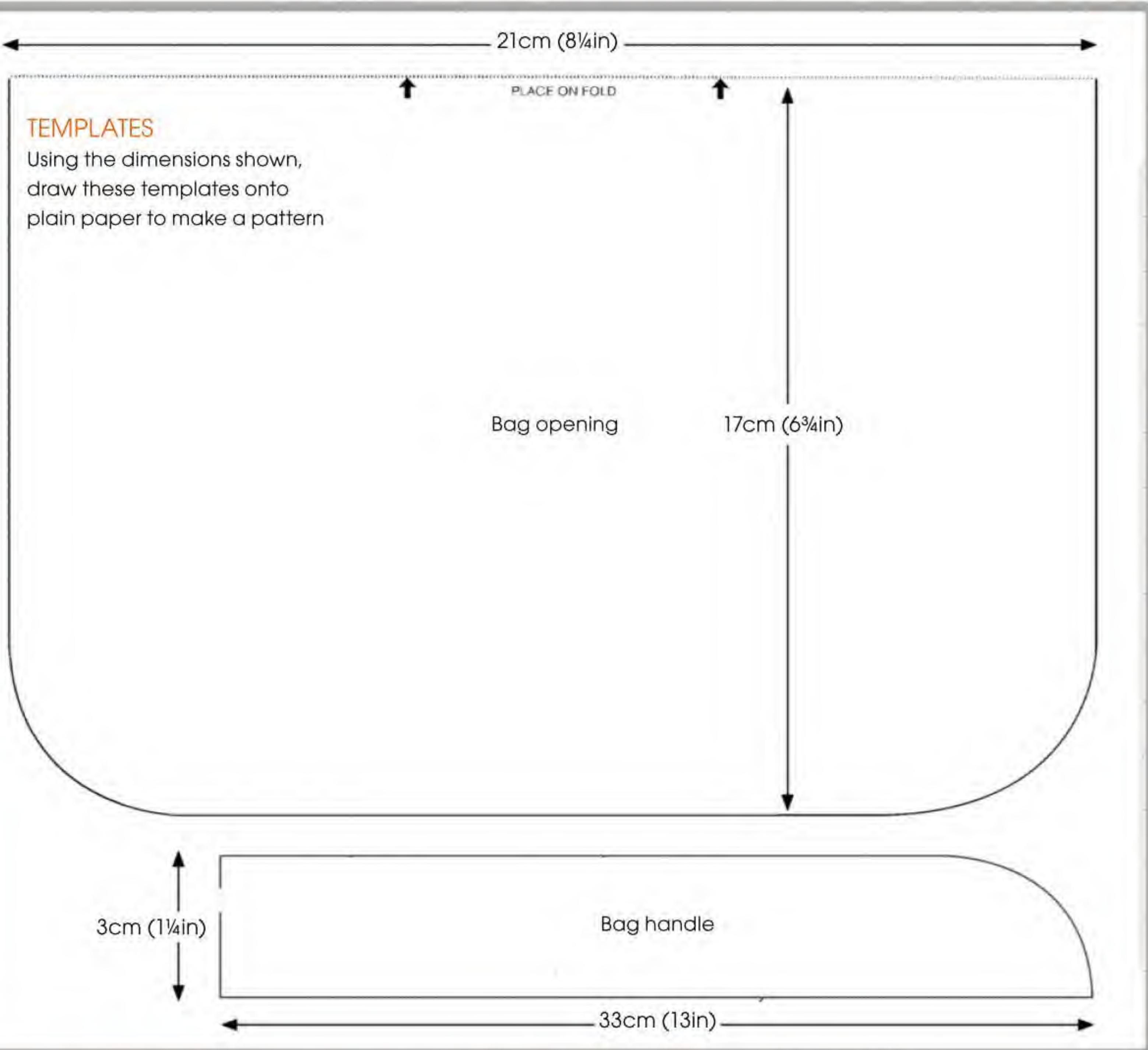
Tack the two layers together close to the raw edges along the handles and opening – this will help keep the layers from slipping around as you apply the bias binding.

Cut a length of bias binding long enough to go around the entire opening of the bag with a bit of overlap. Fold it in half along its length and press it into a slight curve – this will

help with easing it on around the curves of the handle and give a flatter finish.

Apply the bias binding along the raw edge of the bag opening, making sure that you fold the bias over the raw edges so that both the outer and lining are covered (figs. 5–7).

Attach bias binding in the same way to both of the handle openings.



FOLDING THE BAG

Lay the bag flat (fig. 6) on a table or floor to make it easy to work with. Take the outer edge of the handle and fold it under until it meets the inner edge of the opening.

Continue the fold, making a pleat down the side of the bag (fig. 7), adjusting as you go to keep it even, and making sure to include the lining layer in the fold. Pin in place.

Repeat the pleating for the opposite side and press the folds in place. Tack the folds in place and along the bottom edge of the bag.

To keep the folded handles from shifting, you can stitch the top of the folded handle in place (fig. 7). Use small neat hand stitches which won't show up.

FINISHING THE BAG

1 CUT SOME BIAS BINDING

Cut a length of bias binding 2.5cm (1in) longer than the width of the bottom of the bag. Fold it in half along its length and press. Turn under 1cm (3/8in) on either end of the bias binding and press (fig. 8).

2 CLOSE UP THE BOTTOM

Apply the bias binding to the bottom of the bag to close the opening. Sandwich all of the layers between the folds of the bias binding. Ensure the bias tape is folded over all raw edges, encasing both the front and back of the bag. Pin and stitch in place (fig. 9).

All about... TIES, HANDLES AND STRAPS

From bags to bootlaces, mastering the simple technique needed to make ties, handles and straps will let you give any project a professional finish

Ties, handles and straps are really easy to make, and it's a useful skill to learn as they can be used on so many items, from clothing to accessories. One of the big advantages of sewing your own is that you can make them from the same fabric as your finished item so they'll match beautifully,

which a ready-made tape or ribbon just won't. Of course, you can might decide to make them from a contrasting or co-ordinating fabric to complement your finished project.

Sewing your own handles or straps also means you can tailor them to your exact requirements, as they can be any width

or length to give a really professional finish – and this is all something that a beginner can easily achieve.

Ties, handles and straps are all made in exactly the same way – but they can be finished and attached differently to give a variety of styles and uses. We've covered all the basics here...

HOW TO MAKE A BASIC FABRIC TIE

1 Decide what finished length and width you want your fabric tie to be. You need to double the width so you have enough fabric for the back and front of the tie. This will give you the finished fabric width and length.

2 Add 1.5cm (½in) to both ends and sides of this fabric strip for seam allowances. Fold your tie in half lengthways with right sides together.

Use this basic fabric tie method to jazz up your trainers with brand new, handmade shoelaces



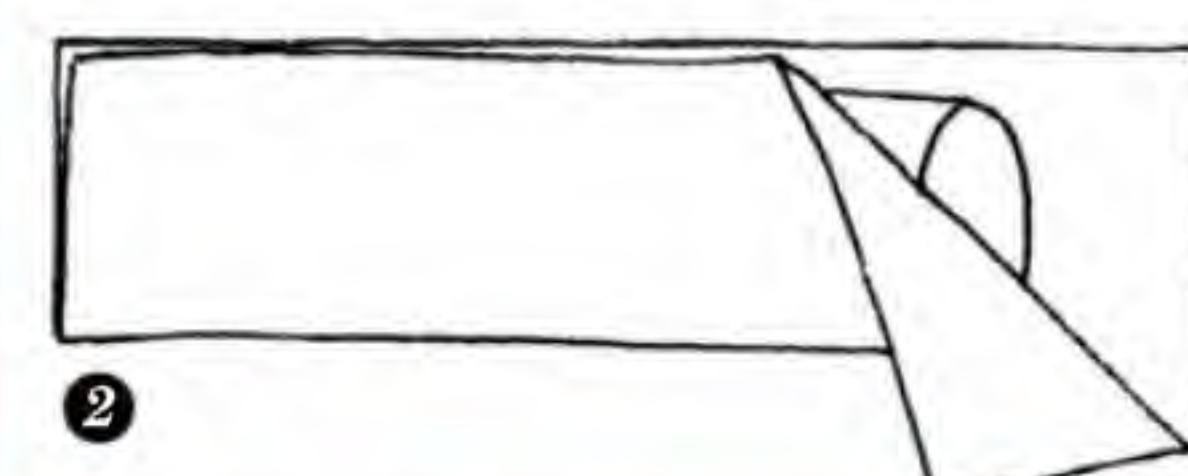
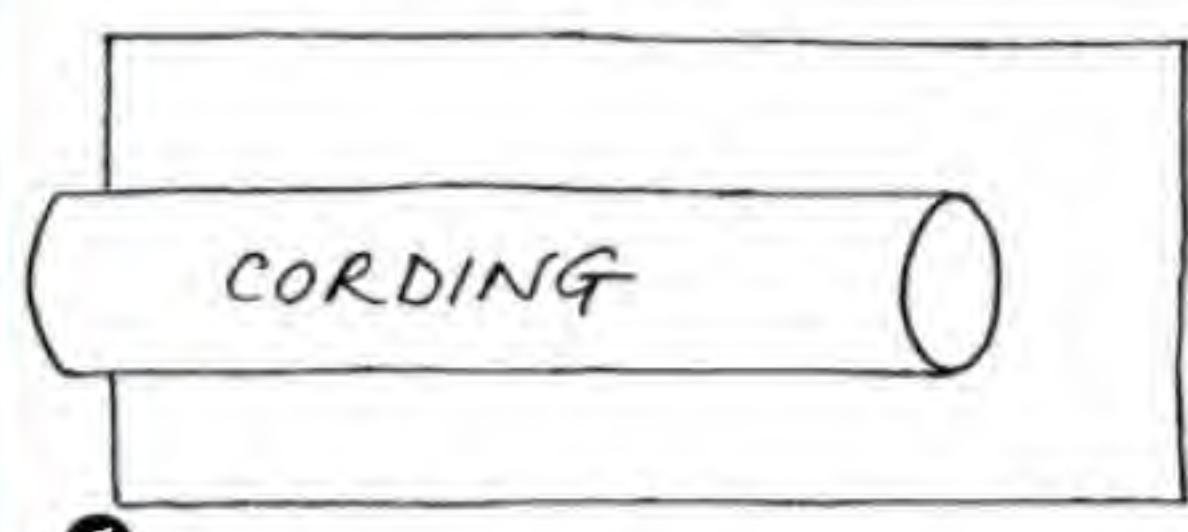
3 Stitch down the length 1.5cm (½in) from the raw edges.

4 Turn your tie right sides out and press. You can either press it so the seam runs down one side or so the seam runs centrally on the back.

5 Turn the two short ends 1.5cm (½in) to the inside of your fabric tube and slip stitch in place.

MAKING A CORDED HANDLE

If you want to make a handle with extra strength and substance then you need to make a fabric strip using the method of turning the long ends under and stitching into place. But, before you stitch them together, put a length of thick piping cord inside the fabric strip (fig. 1), fold the strip round it (fig. 2), then stitch into place. This will give you a thicker handle, which is more comfortable to carry.



STRENGTHENING YOUR HANDLE

For a much stronger handle, iron some fusible interfacing to the wrong side of your fabric strip. You can then make the handle in the usual way, but this will give your handle more strength and weight. This is ideal for fabrics such as woven wool and tweed, which are more flexible.



TWO-COLOURED TIE

1 Cut two strips of different fabrics to the width and length of the finished tie, adding an extra 1.5cm (1/2in) all the way round for the seam allowances.

2 Place the two strips right sides together, matching all raw edges and sew down both long edges using a 6mm (1/4in) seam allowance.

3 Turn the strip right sides out and press. Then you will have one colour on one side and one on the other. This is good if you are making bag handles as you can use the main fabric on one side and the lining fabric for another.



Top tip
Ties can be used as a decorative alternative to elastic bands to keep opened packets sealed

ATTACHING HANDLES AND STRAPS

1 Once you've made your fabric tie, then you need to attach it securely to your project.

2 Pin it in place to the fabric you are attaching it to – and tack if needed – then stitch it firmly down.

3 For a bag it's best to overlap it on to the fabric you are attaching it to by 2.5cm (1in), then stitch in a square all the way round, then diagonally through the centre. This will give it extra strength.

ANOTHER WAY TO MAKE A BASIC FABRIC TIE

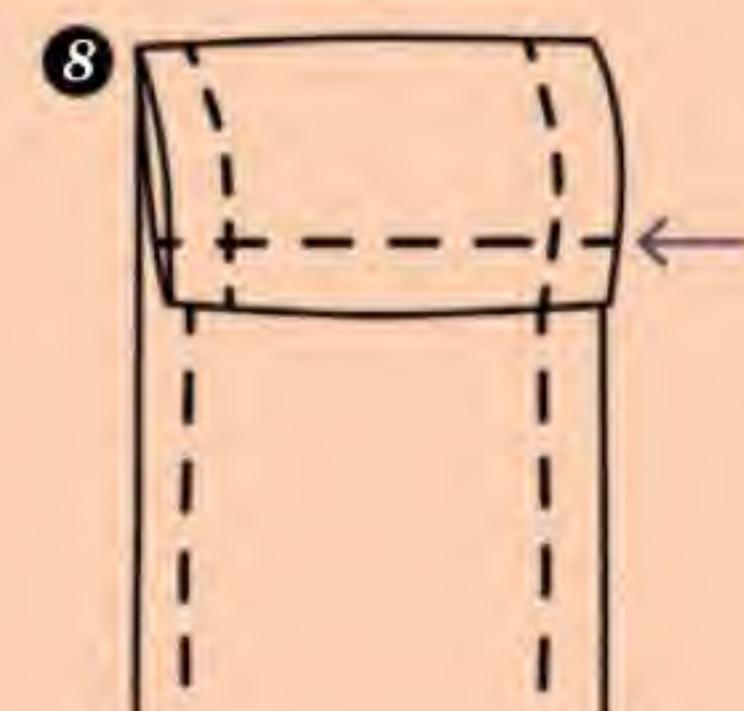
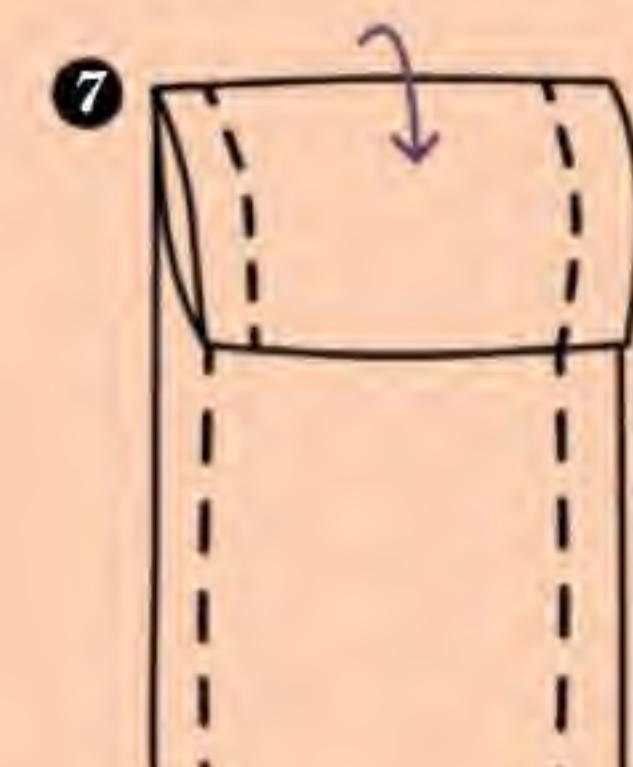
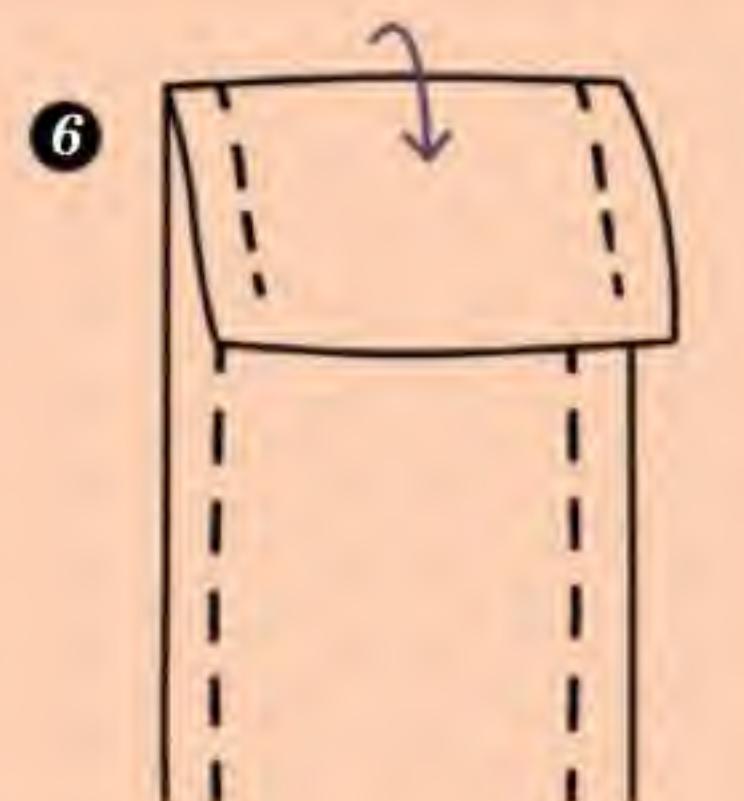
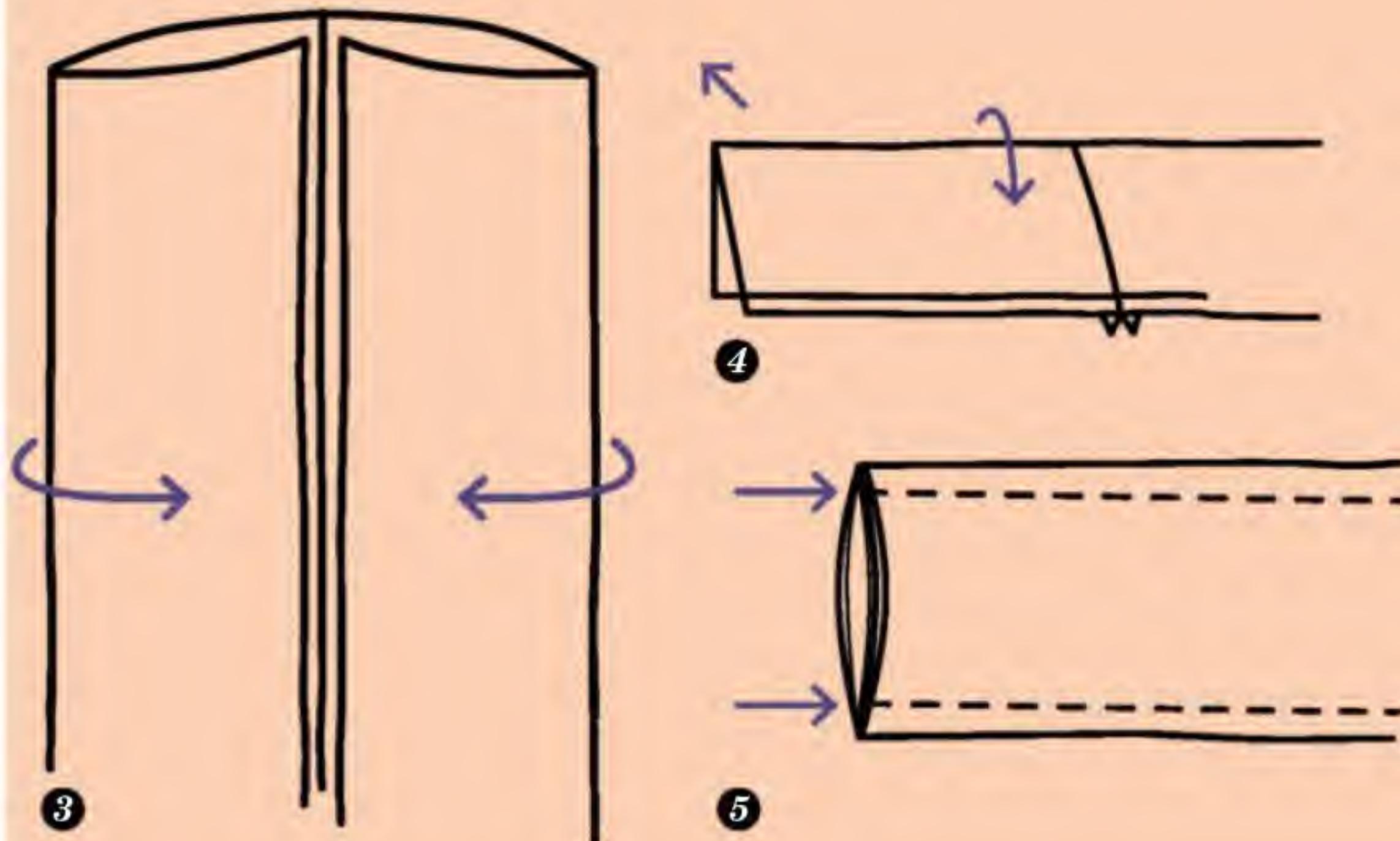
This is another way to make a fabric tie – particularly if your fabric strip is quite narrow or your fabric is thick and may be difficult to turn right sides out.

1 Cut the fabric strip in the same way as with the basic tie, then turn the long edges under by 1.5cm (1/2in) (fig. 3).

2 Now fold the strip in half lengthways with wrong sides together, matching up the turned under edges (fig. 4).

3 Stitch these edges together close to the fold all the way down both sides and across the top and bottom (fig. 5).

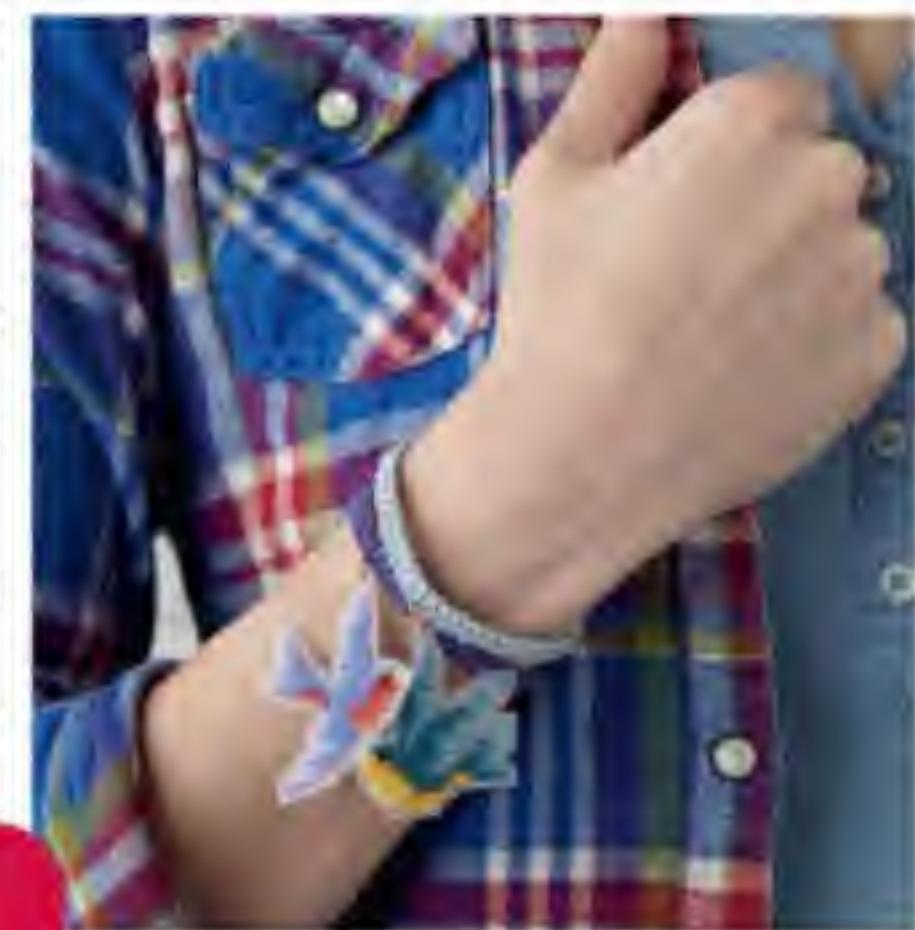
4 Turn the short ends over to one side of the tie twice and slip stitch down to neaten (fig. 6, 7 & 8).



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Child's play apron

By Chris Jefferys

Put your new skills into practice and protect your kids' clothes with this simple, pretty and practical apron!

Creative kids can sometimes get a bit messier than adults when they're baking, drawing or otherwise expressing themselves, so this apron is the perfect garment to make if you know any children who like to get hands-on!

With its straps, pocket and curved hems, it's a great project for practising a couple of new skills. If you don't want to sew the straps for the head loop and waist ties, however, you could use tape or ribbon. In fact, making the ties out of a ribbon in a contrasting colour rather than the same fabric as the apron is a great way to customise it.

The dimensions given here will make an apron that should fit children aged between about four and seven, but the template is an easy shape to scale up if you want to make a larger one – just remember to buy a longer piece of fabric!

YOU WILL NEED

- Fabric: 70x80cm (28x32in)
- Pattern paper
- Pencil and ruler
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

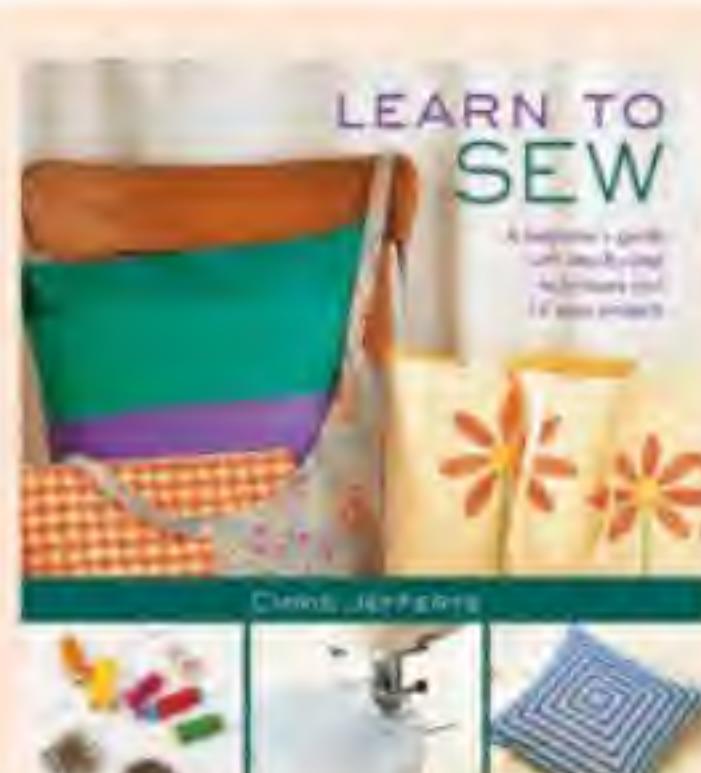
60x44cm (23½x17½in)

Seam allowance

1cm (½in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Learn to Sew
by Chris Jefferys

With a series of tutorials that gradually introduce new techniques, *Learn To Sew* is a great resource for anyone who's keen to pick up the basics of sewing. As well as guides on making items from scratch, the book also boasts a wealth of advice on making simple alterations, such as taking up hems or moving buttons – perfect for breathing new life into old favourites!

Published by New Holland, PB, £7.99

www.newhollandpublishers.com



CUTTING OUT THE FABRIC

First make a paper pattern for your apron. Following the measurements on the diagram opposite, draw a line 19cm (7½in) long across for the top edge of the apron, then draw a line 60cm (23½in) down the centre to mark the length. Mark 21cm (8¼in) down from the top on the centre line, then measure 22cm (8¾in) out from either side of the mark to mark the side edges. Draw in the side and lower edges, joining them with curves at the lower corners. Then draw curved lines to join the top corners to the side edges to form the apron shape.

Draw out a pocket pattern 23cm (9in) wide by 15cm (6in) deep with a curved lower edge. Fold the patterns in half before cutting them out to ensure that both halves are symmetrical. Pin the paper patterns to your fabric and cut round them. For the apron straps, cut three strips of fabric 53x6cm (21x2¼in).



SEWING THE APRON

1

To hem the curved edges of the bib, turn them over 1cm (½in), then 1cm (½in) again to the wrong side, press and pin. Machine stitch in place close to the edge. Hem the sides and lower edge in exactly the same way.

2

As the bottom corners are curved it can be tricky to hem these as there will be extra fabric in the hems. The best way to do this is to sew a line of tacking stitches round each corner 1cm (½in) in from the edge remembering to secure the beginning of the thread with a few stitches. Pull the tacking stitches up to gather each corner then you will find it easier to turn them over to hem.

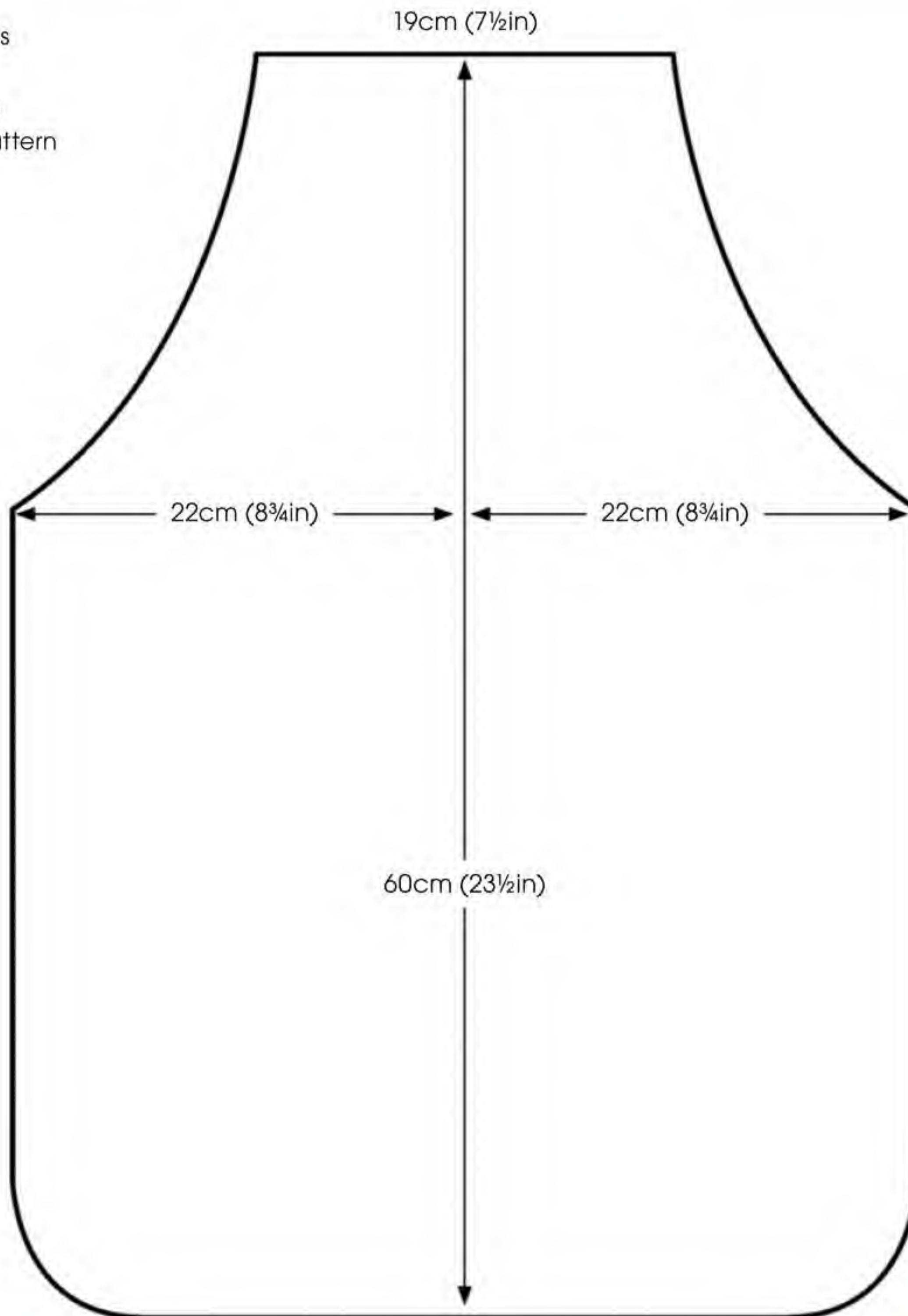
3

Hem the top of the apron by turning the top edge over 1cm (½in) to the wrong side, then 2cm (¾in) to the wrong side again and machine stitch in place.



TEMPLATE

Using the dimensions shown, draw this template onto plain paper to make a pattern



4

To make the pocket, stitch a row of machine stitching around 1.6cm (5/8in) in from the curved edge of the pocket. Using the stitching as a guide, press the seam allowance over to the wrong side so that the stitching rolls over onto the wrong side.

5

Press the pocket in half to mark its centre. Pin then tack the pocket on the apron with its top edge 23cm (9in) down from the top of the apron. Machine stitch in place around the curved edges and down the centre, following the crease as a guide.

6

Turn and press all the edges of the straps over 1cm (3/8in) to the wrong side. Now press the straps in half lengthways and stitch along the length and across the ends. Pin the ends of one strap over the hem on the top corners of the apron to make the neck strap and stitch in place with a square of stitching. Stitch the other two straps to the top of the side edges in the same way.

Top tip
A brightly patterned fabric will disguise more mess, so choose your fabric wisely!



Pretty cushion with ties

By Chris Jefferys

A new cushion to brighten your décor... what a great idea! This one is simple to make, and is held together with fuss-free ties

The pretty cushion is simple to make. It has a flap facing to tuck the pad behind and straight ties to hold the edges together. The facing and ties can either be made from a contrast fabric or from the same fabric as the cover.

If you're making curtains or other soft furnishings, why not buy some extra fabric to make yourself a cushion or several? The same pattern in a different colour works well for contrast and interest as part of a theme.

Something else to experiment with is using two different fabrics – one for the front, one for the back – to give flexibility for refreshing your colour scheme.

This is a great design for cushions for a room that gets dusty or dirty, as the ties make it easy to remove the cover for washing.

YOU WILL NEED

- Medium-weight furnishing fabric: 43x86cm (17x34in)
- Contrasting fabric for facing and ties: 43x40cm (17x16in)
- Cushion pad: 40cm (16in) square
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

40cm (16in) square

Seam allowance

1.5cm (5/8in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



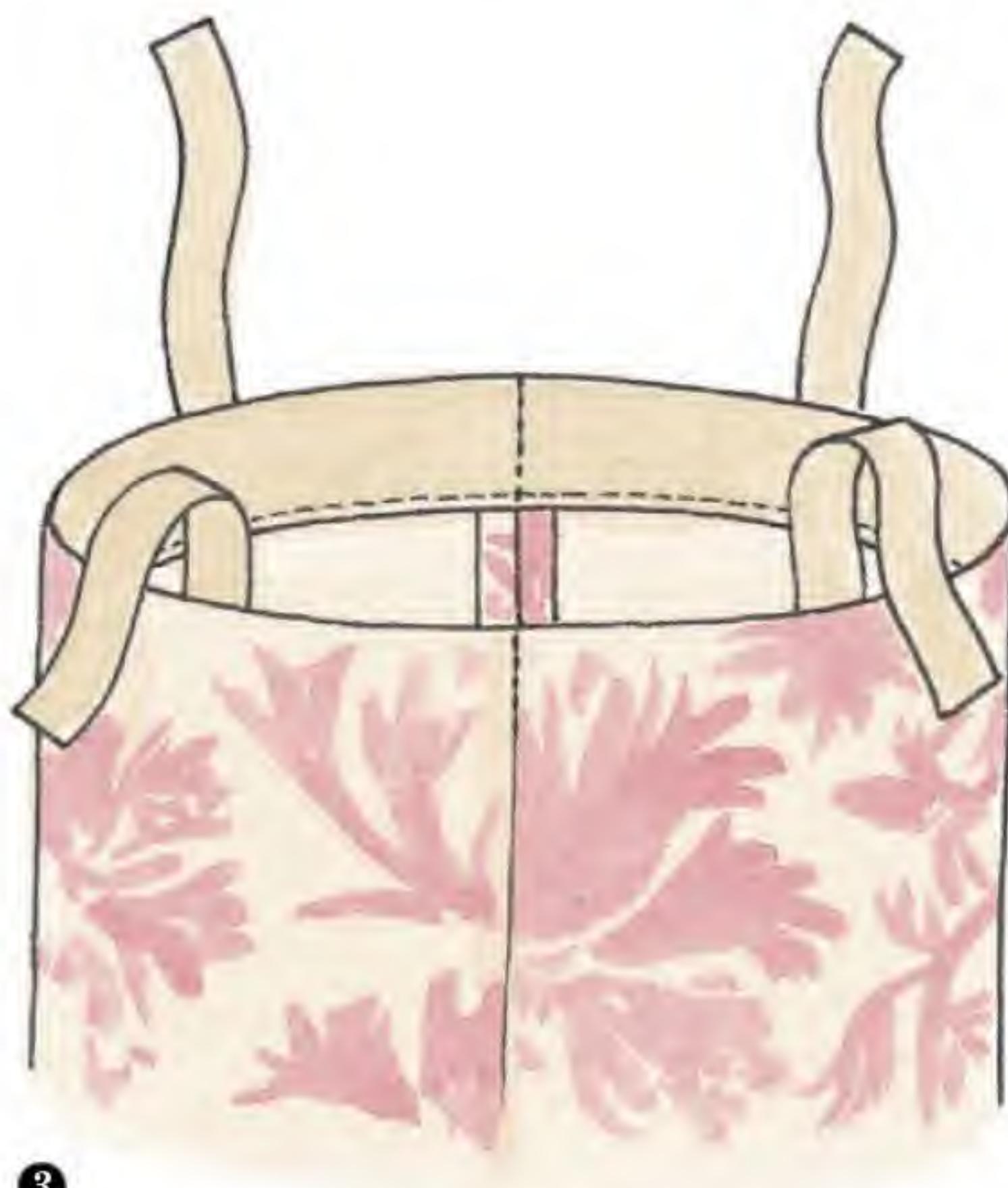
Weekend Projects: Soft Furnishings
by Chris Jefferys

Here's a collection of 50 gorgeous soft furnishing projects for your home. Divided into four sections (Beds, Chairs, Tables and Windows), instructions are accompanied by step-by-step illustrations. Many items are easy to make but, with practice, beginners can graduate to more complex projects, such as lined curtains and fitted bed linen.

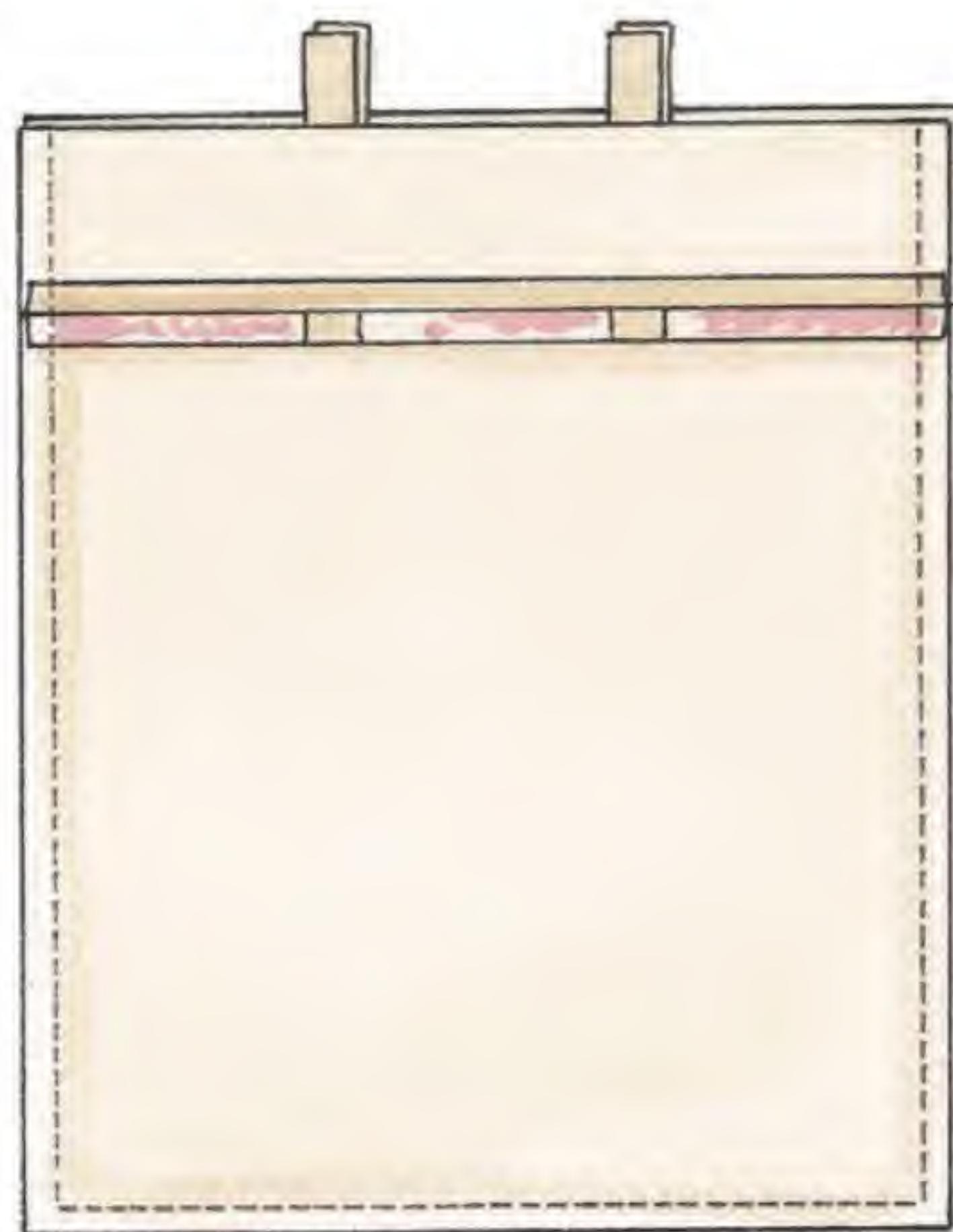
Published by New Holland, HB, £9.99
www.newhollandpublishers.com



1



3



2

CUTTING OUT THE FABRIC

Cut two pieces for the front and back of the cover out of your main fabric, each measuring 43cm (17in) square. Cut two pieces of your contrast fabric for the facings, each measuring 12x43cm (4¾x17in).

Cut four strips of contrast fabric for the ties, each measuring 18x8cm (7x3¼ in).

Make the ties by folding a strip in half lengthways with right sides together and sewing across one short edge and the long edge. Trim the seams and corners, turn right side out and press.

Place two ties right sides together on one edge of the front and back pieces, spaced equally and with the raw edges level. Place a facing piece on top of each of the front and back pieces with right sides together. Stitch together along the edge so the ends of the ties are sewn in the seams (fig. 1).

Open out the facings away from the cushion and press the seams open. Place the front and back right sides

SEWING THE CUSHION

together with the facing seams matching exactly. Stitch the front and back together around three sides including the sides of the facing (fig. 2).

Trim the corners and turn the cover right sides out. Make a double hem around the edge of the facing by turning the fabric over 6mm (¼in) then 6mm (¼in) again to the wrong side and stitching. Press the facing inside the cushion so the seam is at the edge. Open the side seams out and, working from the right side, sew down each side seam through the cover and facing to hold the facing in place (fig. 3).

Insert the cushion pad and tie the ties.



All about... TRIMS

Finish your sewing projects perfectly by embellishing them with edgings and trims – it's an effective way to add colour, glamour and extra personality

Adding trims to your finished project can make it look very special and is really easy to do. There is a huge choice of trimmings to choose from, such as ribbon, fringing, pom-poms, lace, feathers and sequins. All you need to know is what can be applied to what and how to attach it.

RIBBON

Ribbon is a very useful and extremely versatile trim as it comes in an enormous variety of materials, colours, widths and patterns, including seasonal designs for festivities and special occasions. Some are wired, which is ideal for when you want to fix a shape.

Where to attach

You can stitch ribbon on top of ready-made items,



such as fabric bags, aprons or table linen. Choose a mixture of ribbons and attach them in rows, evenly spaced or overlap them for a more striking effect. Attach a length ribbon round the hems of jeans, sleeves, lapels or simply use one to pull up a drawstring bag. The possibilities are endless.

How to attach

It can only be sewn on in straight lines, unless you gather it or fold it. You can buy pre-gathered ribbon if you prefer.

- Cut the ribbon to the length you need it, adding 2.5cm (1in) extra on the ends for hemming.

- Pin it into place, then tack, turning the ends under to the wrong side to stop them from fraying and to look neat. Ribbon can easily move and slip so tacking really will hold it in place and you will get a neater finish.
- Work small hand stitches through only the very edge of the ribbon, then into your fabric to stitch it into place. Alternatively you can machine stitch the ribbon on – but make sure you keep your sewing line nice and straight. Sew both sides of the ribbon in the same direction, otherwise it might wrinkle.

POM-POM & BEADED BRAIDS

Both of these braids look really effective embellishing the edges of items – you just need to take a little care when attaching them. You can buy pom-poms attached to a length of fabric tape in different sizes and colours. Pom-pom trims are also sold with the colour of the pom-poms changing along the length for a really interesting multi-coloured effect.

Beaded braids are sold as lengths of ribbon or tape with droplets of beads attached along their length – a variety of sizes, shapes and colours are available.

RIC-RAC BRAID

Ric-rac comes in different widths and colours and gives a really home-spun charm to any project, and works really well when you want a vintage country look.

WHERE TO ATTACH

Ric-rac can be used to embellish any item or to just give a little pretty detail along a top edge.

It works well stitched on top of the edge of napkins or handkerchiefs or in parallel rows along the bottom of a skirt. Ric-rac also looks really effective when





Where to attach

You can use pom-poms around the tops of little bags like the one on p64 or stitch a row of them along the bottom of a wall hanging. They also look fabulous in the seams of cushions and bolsters.

They also look really effective if you stitch them down the leading edge of a curtain as they can be seen when the curtain is open and closed. Stitch a length of them along the bottom of Roman blinds for a really pretty finish or sew a length along the top of a fabric bag

or in parallel rows across the bag so the pom-poms hang downwards over the bag.

Beaded trims look very pretty, but don't attach them to anything that will get a lot of handling or the beads may come unstrung. Stitch a row to the bottom of a fabric lampshade, attach them round the edge of a cushion or sew overlapping rows of them to an evening bag for expensive looking glamour. Or for a simple, but eye-catching look, edge an umbrella with a contrasting row of beads – it's a quick, inexpensive instant upcycle.

How to attach

You can stitch pom-pom or beaded trims on by hand or machine. The only thing you need to be careful is of catching the little pom-poms or beads in your thread. Use small neat hand stitches or, if you are stitching by machine you could stick masking tape over the trims to hold them in place and stop them from getting caught under your needle while you are stitching them onto your item.

sewn into the seams round the edge of a cushion cover or bag as only the top half of the curves are seen so it gives a really pretty effect – use a jumbo ric-rac braid for this.

You can also create effective zigzag-shaped stripy patterns on textile surfaces, such as tablecloths, curtains and cushions.

HOW TO ATTACH

- Pin, then tack, your length of ric-rac into place, turning the short ends underneath to neaten.
- It's best to machine stitch it with a straight line of stitching into place down the centre so it is firmly attached.

To put ric-rac into a seam, pin the ric-rac braid all the way round the edge of your fabric, positioning it so that the centre of the braid width is 1.5cm (½in) from the raw edge of the fabric. Start and finish in the centre of the lower edge of the fabric and ease the braid round corners. Fold the ends of the ric-rac at a right angle so they overlap slightly towards the edge of the fabric. Now tack the ric-rac in place and stitch the other piece of fabric wrong sides together on top.





Mini drawstring bag

By Cheryl Owen

Edged with pom-pom trim, this little drawstring bag makes a great gift... you could even hide a bonus present inside!

This small quirky bag gives you an opportunity to practice working with trims on a small project. Use it to store trinkets like jewellery or other small treasures, or present it as a special gift.

The bag is edged with a funky pom-pom trim, which picks up the colouring of the patterned fabric. When choosing your trim, it's nice to pick a colour that picks up the design in the main fabric, but you could just as easily choose a completely different colour – white pom-poms edging black fabric will look really striking.

For the drawstring cord we've used the same colour as the background of the fabric, but here, too, you could just as easily go for contrast by choosing something different.

It's all about expressing your personality (or the personality of your gift recipient)!

YOU WILL NEED

- Cotton fabric for main bag and facings: 35x40cm (14x16in)
- Small pom pom trim: 40cm (16in) to co-ordinate with fabric
- Fine cord: 90cm (35in), for the drawstring
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

18x14cm (7x5½in)

Seam allowance

1cm (½in)

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



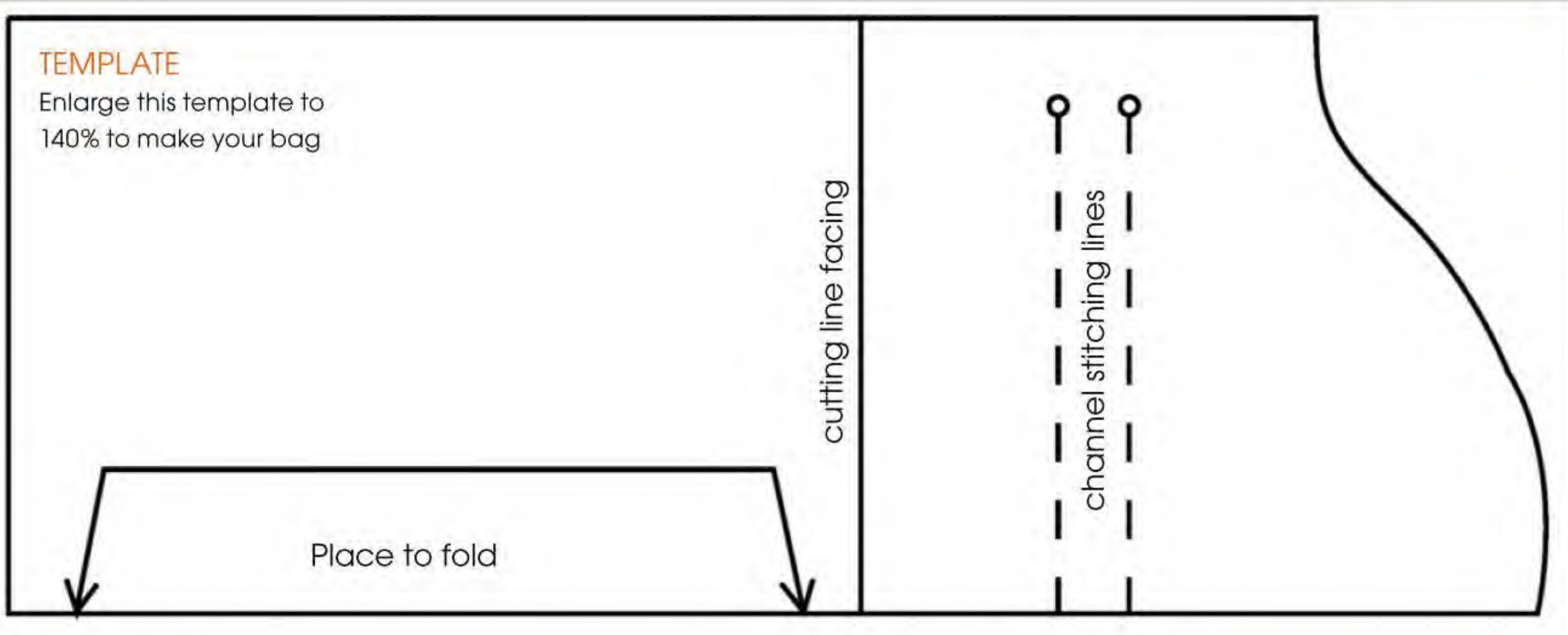
The Book of Bags
By Cheryl Owen

Make sure you're never without the perfect accessory – *The Book of Bags* contains 30 stunning projects that cover all sorts of bags, from duffle bags to handbags, beach bags, purses and more. With detailed instructions, templates and photos, Cheryl Owen's designs are easy to follow and simple to make, even for complete beginners.

Published by New Holland, PB, £14.99
www.newhollandpublishers.com

TEMPLATE

Enlarge this template to 140% to make your bag

**MAKING THE BAG**

Using the template, cut two bag outers and two facings from your fabric. Neaten the straight side and lower edges of the bag outers with a zigzag stitch. On the right side of the bag outers, pin and tack a length of pom-pom trim to both of the curved edges within 2cm (3/4in) of the side edges (fig. 1).

Stitch the bag outers together with right sides facing, leaving the curved upper edge open. Leave a gap between the dots which are shown on the template at the ends of the channel stitching lines. Turn right sides out and press.

Stitch the facings together with right sides facing, along the short side edges (fig. 2). Press the seams open. Remove the bed of the sewing machine to make it easier to stitch. Turn under the straight lower edge 1cm (3/8in) then stitch in place to hem the facing.

Pin the joined facings to the upper edge of the bag outers with right sides together and matching side seams. Stitch the curved upper edges using a zip foot and taking care not to catch the pom-poms as you stitch. You can tack these down to help with this.



Press the facings to the inside of the bag, then stitch the two lines for the casing channel in the positions shown on the template.

Cut the length of cord in half, then use a bodkin to thread one half through the channel, entering and emerging through one side. Repeat with the other half of the cord, starting and finishing at the other side of the bag.

Snip off six pom-poms from the length of trim. Stitch the two ends of the cord together on each side, then stitch three pom-poms to each end to finish.



All about... BORDERING A FABRIC EDGE

Learn how to create a neat finish to the edges of throws and other textile squares with a sewn-on border that's a decorative feature in itself

Adding a border to a piece of fabric gives it that extra special finishing touch which is quite easy to do but will make it look more professional. You can add a border to 'frame' a piece of fabric for a cushion front before you attach the back to it. Or, add a deep mitred border to a length of fabric for a table runner.

You can very quickly make a lovely gift by bordering a blanket or length of fleece in a contrasting fabric to make a very attractive throw. The Bordered Throw project on p68 shows you a really clever way of adding a border with mitred corners to a length of chenille fabric or read on to learn some other border ideas.



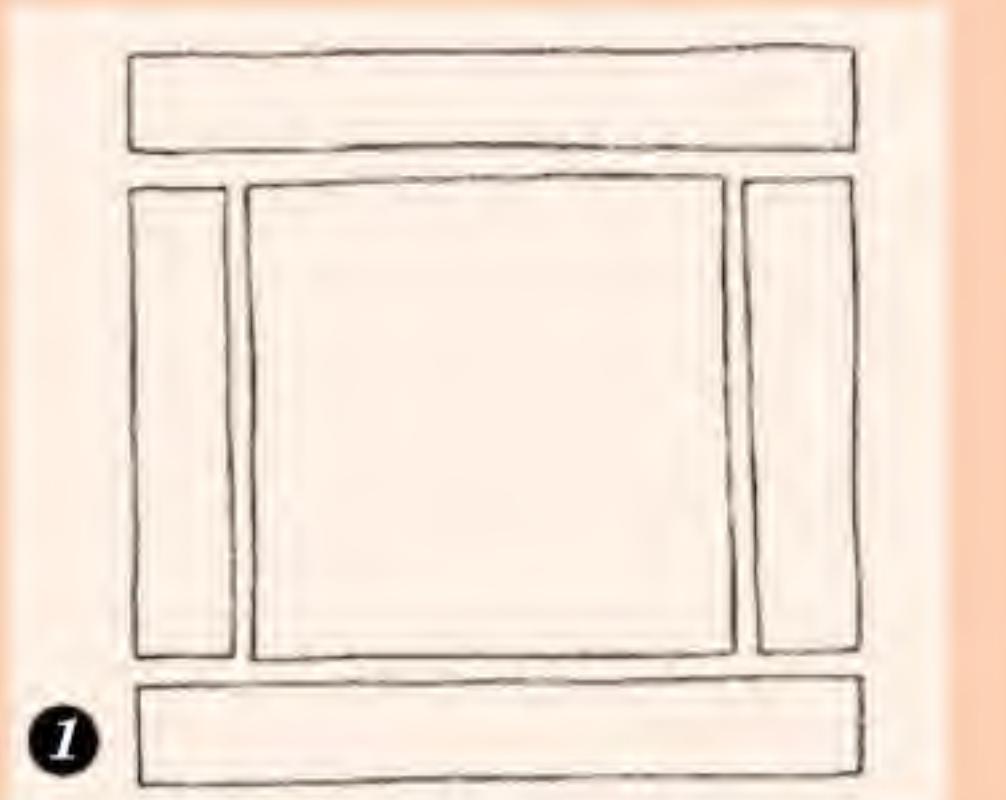
MAKING A SIMPLE BORDERED THROW

1 **Measure** the length of the piece of fabric you wish to add a border to - this will be the length of your two side strips as the opposite border will be the same. Decide how wide you want your border to be. A narrow 2.5cm (1in) border will give a neat edge but a deeper 8cm (3in) will give a good strong contrast. Your fabric needs to be twice the width plus a 1.5cm (1/2in) seam allowance on either edge. So, for example, if you want an 8cm (3in) finished border then your fabric

strip needs to be 18cm (7in) wide. To cut the top and bottom strips, measure the width of the fabric to work out the length they need to be and add a 1.5cm (1/2in) seam allowance plus the border width you cut for the side strips, at either end. This is because the top and bottom border strips will be attached over the fabric and side strips so will need to be longer. The width of the strip needs to be the same as the width for the other strips you cut previously.

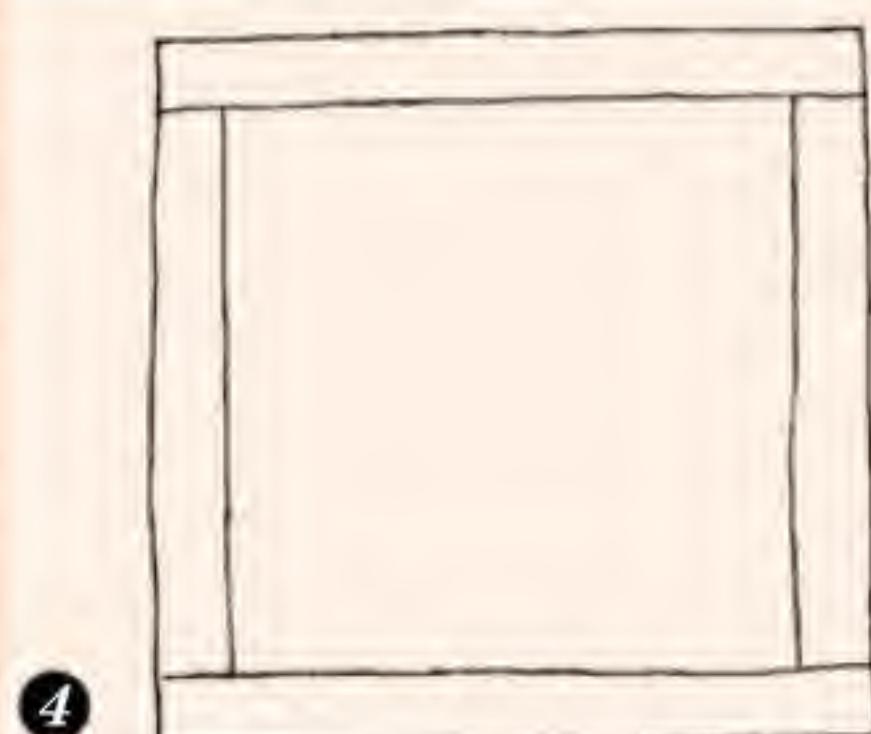
2 **Fold** one of the side strips in half lengthways, wrong sides together and press. This pressed fold will be the edge of your border. Matching raw edges, place the length of it right sides together along the length of your fabric. Stitch the border to the fabric using a 1.5cm (1/2in) seam allowance.

3 **Press** this seam open, then fold the border over to the other side of your main piece of fabric so that the pressed fold is at the edges. Turn the long edge under by 1.5cm (1/2in) and stitch it in place either by machine or by hand using slip stitch (see p25 for instructions). Repeat this with the opposite border.

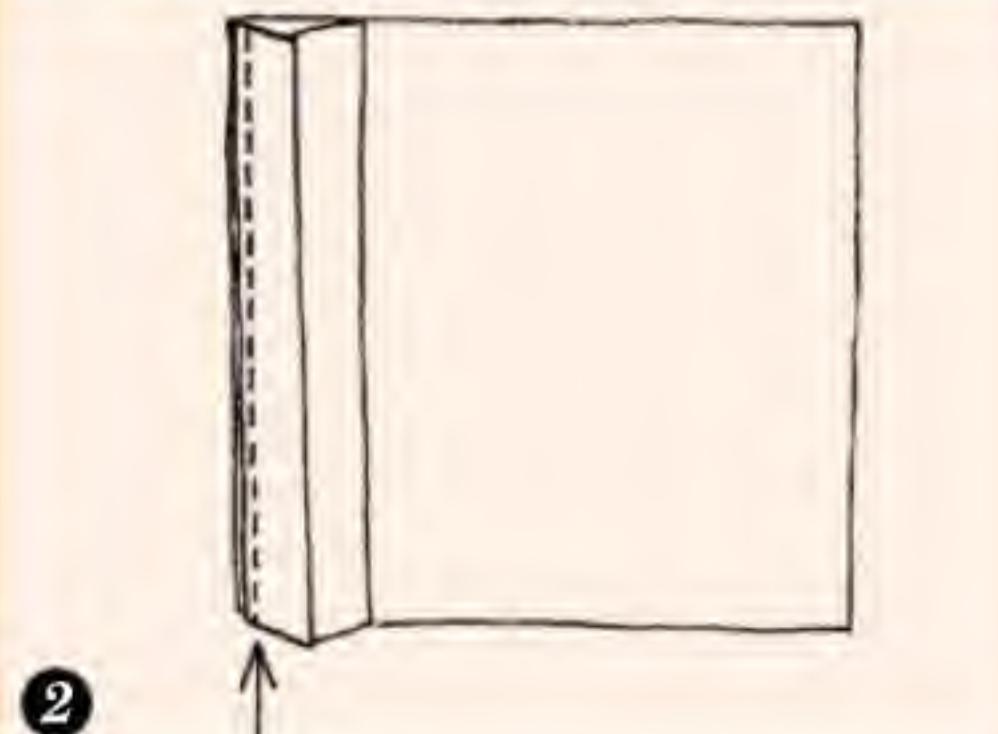


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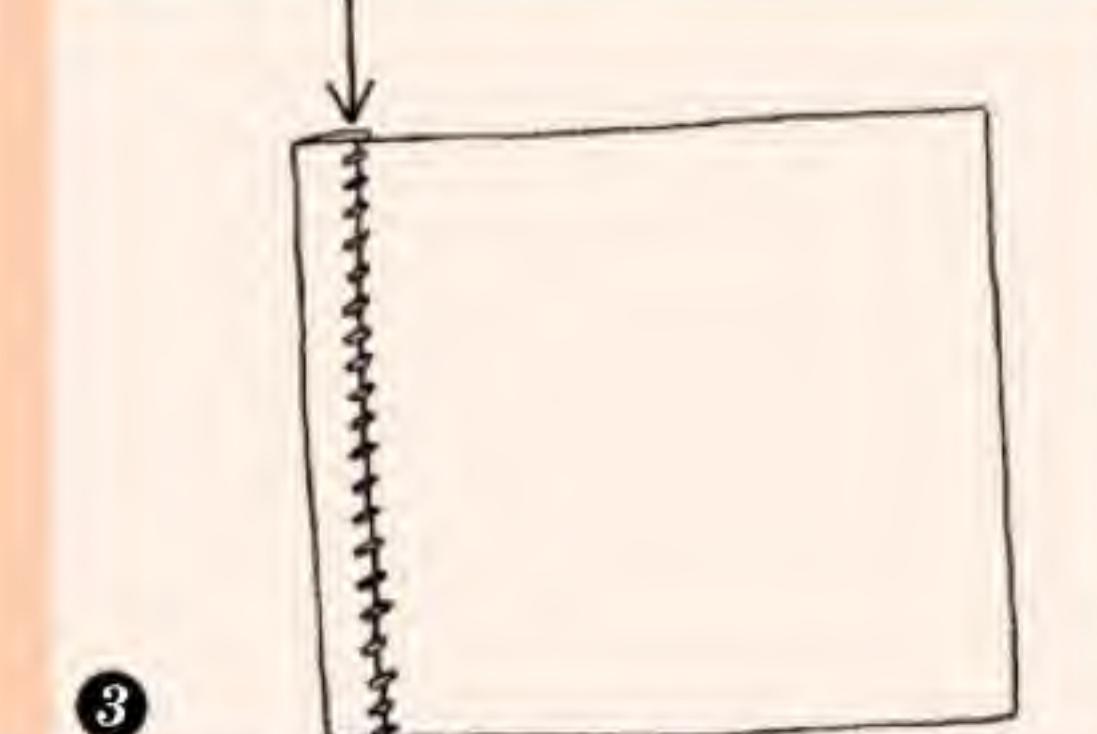
4 **Attach** the other two border strips in the same way. With these you need to turn under the short ends by 1.5cm (1/2in) before you attach them, then slip stitch them down when you have finished. Press the strips on both sides to complete and make them flat and neat.



4



2



3



SIMPLE FABRIC BORDERS

If you want to frame a piece of plain or embroidered fabric to make a cushion cover bigger, then choose this method.

- 1** Decide what the finished size of your cushion is going to be, then measure the outside of the central fabric piece and add a 1.5cm (½in) seam allowance all round.
- 2** Calculate the fabric border, remembering to add seam allowances. You need two short ones at the top and bottom and two longer

ones to go down the sides of your top and bottom borders and the central fabric.

- 3** Sew the top and bottom borders to the fabric, right sides together. Press the seams open.
- 4** Attach the two side borders in the same way, down the edges of the top and bottom borders as well as the stitched fabric.
- 5** Your cushion front is now ready to attach to the cushion back to finish.



MITRED FABRIC BORDERS

This will achieve the same fabric framed look as with the simple fabric borders but gives a different effect. It's trickier to do, but take your time - measure and stitch carefully and accurately and you will achieve a professional looking effect.

- 1** Decide on the finished size of your cushion cover, then trim the main fabric to the central dimensions plus a 1.5cm (½in) seam allowance all round.
- 2** Cut four fabric border strips - each one needs to be:
Length: same length as finished cover plus seam allowance,
Width: the width of the border strip plus the seam allowance.

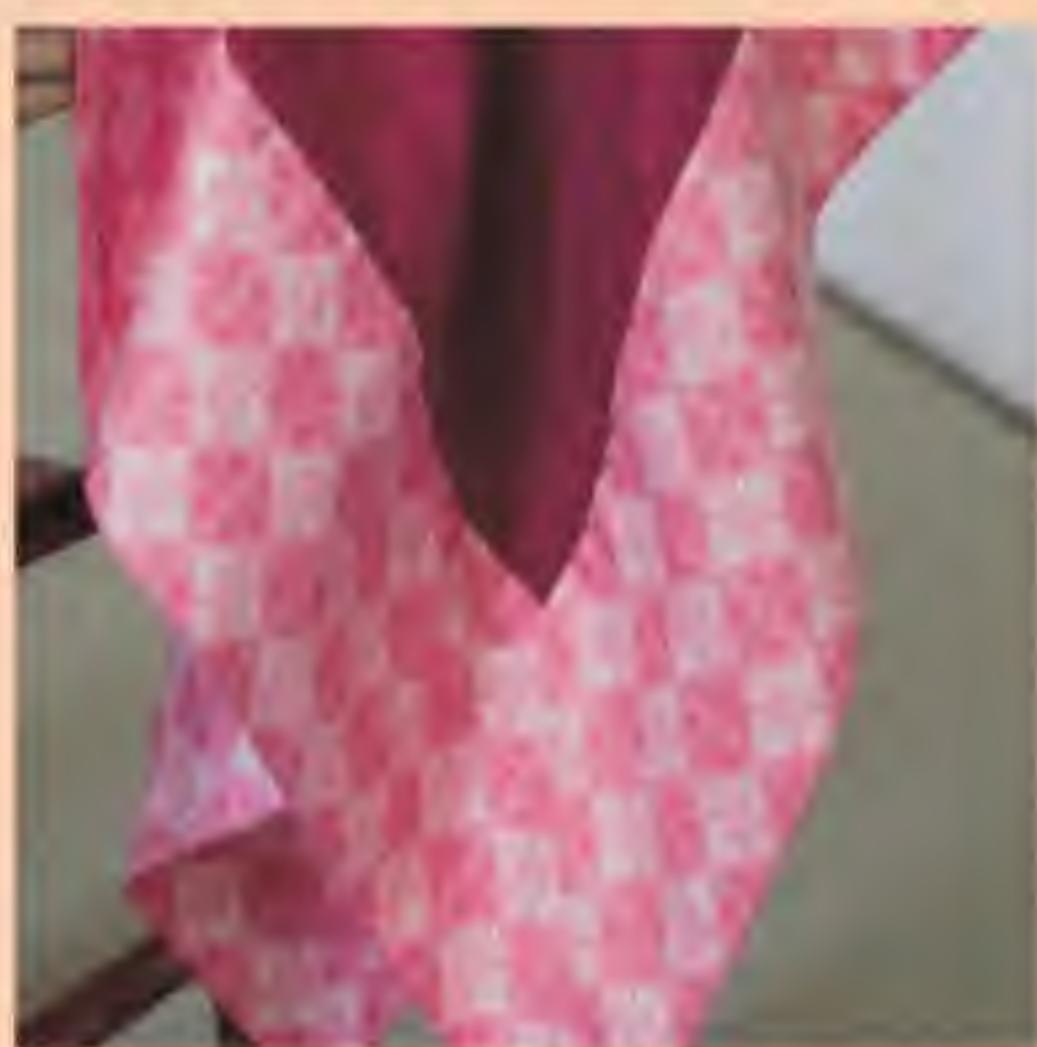
3 Pin one border strip to one side of the main fabric, making sure it is placed centrally and has right sides together. Stitch the border to the centre using a 1.5cm (½in) seam allowance but starting and finishing 1.5cm (½in) from each edge (fig. 1).

- 4** Attach the other border strips in the same way. Be careful not to stitch into the strips already attached (fig. 2).
- 5** To create the mitred corners, place your cushion front right sides down and work on one corner at a time. Fold one strip over the other and pin. Draw a diagonal line on the border from the inner corner where the two border strips meet to the outer corner of the strip.

6 Swap the positions of the border strips and draw this same line on the other border (fig. 3).

7 With right sides of the border strips together, match up the pencil lines, pin, then stitch along these lines. Press the seam open and trim (fig. 4).

8 Mitre the other three corners in the same way then trim the seam allowances and press.



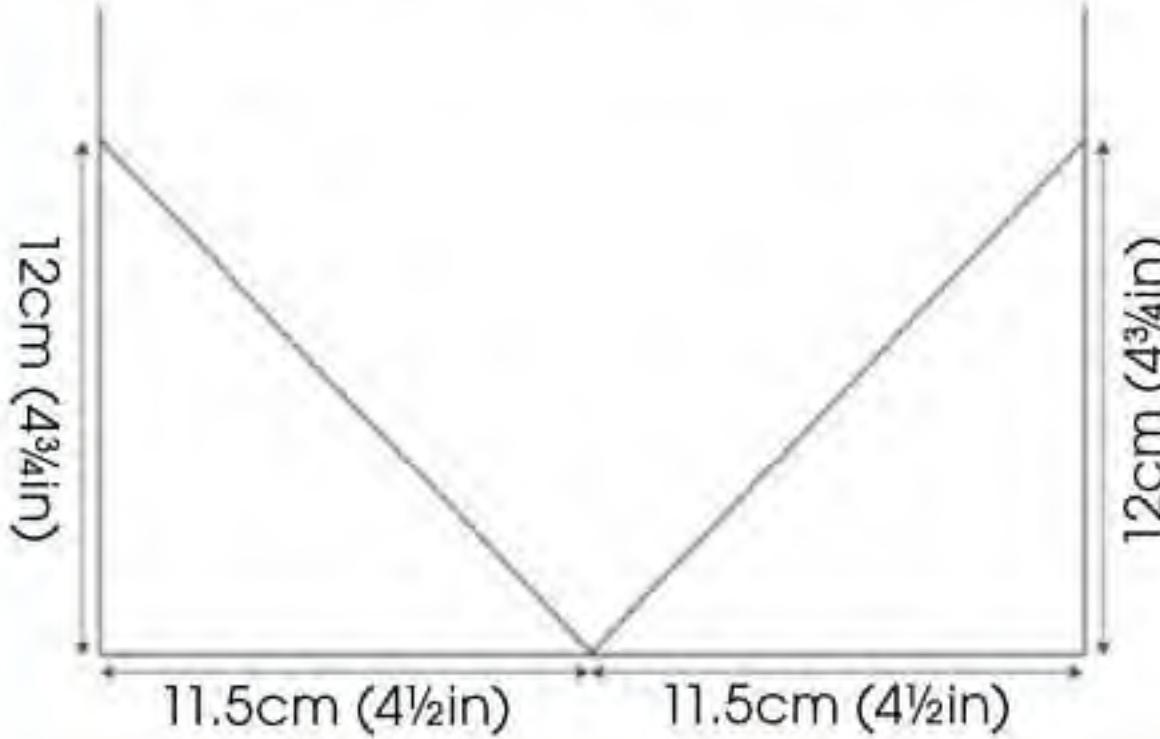


Deep bound throw

By Cheryl Owen

Upcycle an inexpensive throw... give it a touch of luxury by adding a deep border in a pretty fabric of your choice

Ready-made soft furnishings can be picked up so cheaply these days that it's easy to give a room a makeover without breaking the bank. A colourful throw is great for covering up an armchair that's a little worn – and much cheaper than reupholstering if you've decided you don't like the sofa fabric any more! But if you want something unique, a border is a quick way of adding interest to a shop-bought throw.



YOU WILL NEED

- Fabric for main part: 137cm (54in) square
- Fabric for border: 161x92cm (63x36in)
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

145cm (57in) square

Seam allowance

1.5cm (1/2in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Love... Sewing
By Cheryl Owen

By following the projects in *Love... Sewing* you'll be able to fill your home with beautiful creations. With 25 patterns for everything from table runners to doorstops, the book is an invaluable guide for anyone taking their first steps in making their own soft furnishings. Step-by-step instructions mean you can transform your home in no time!

Published by New Holland, PB, £12.99
www.newhollandpublishers.com



MAKING A DEEP BORDER

1

Cut four strips of fabric for the border each measuring 161x23cm (63x9in). Cut the ends of the borders to points, by following the diagram on p68 for the measurements. Press under 1.5cm (1/2in) on one long edge of each border (fig. 1).

2

With right sides facing and matching the pressed edges, stitch the four borders together to make a square at the mitred ends, finishing 1.5cm (1/2in) from the long raw edges (fig. 2). Clip the corners, then press the seams open – use a moistened finger to press the corners.

3

With right sides facing, pin and stitch the long raw edges of the border to the throw, taking a 1.5cm (1/2in) seam allowance and pivoting the seam at the corners. Press the seam toward the border. Trim the seam allowance on the rectangle to 1cm (3/8in) to layer the seam (fig. 3).

4

Pin the pressed edges of the border along the seam. Press the border in half. Slip stitch the pressed edge along the seam (fig. 4). See p25 to find out how to work slip stitch.

Top tip
Work the slip stitches close together so they are strong and won't come undone with wear



All about... BUTTONS AND BUTTONHOLES

Learning how to make buttonholes is essential for any stitcher who wants to make beautifully crafted, and tailored, garments and home accessories

One of the basic sewing skills everyone should know is how to sew on a button. Obviously this is essential for sewing buttons back on which have fallen off, but it's important to sew them on securely. When buttons are sewn onto shop-bought garments they are sewn on by machine in the factory. If the beginning or the end of the thread is not secured really tightly then the button can easily fall off, by just pulling the thread.

Then there are your own makes. You don't want to lovingly craft a tailored garment, only to have the button fall off on first wearing (especially if it's a gift!).

When it comes to making buttonholes, there are several different ways to make them, depending on the type of fabric, and the effect you are wanting to achieve. They can be done by hand or by machine. Whichever method you choose, always practice a few times on a spare scrap of fabric to make sure they are neat and the button fits snugly through.

THE BEST WAY TO SEW ON A FLAT BUTTON

Flat buttons have flat backs that sit flush on the fabric. They have two or four holes in them to stitch them on through. There are two ways of sewing these on.



FIG. 1

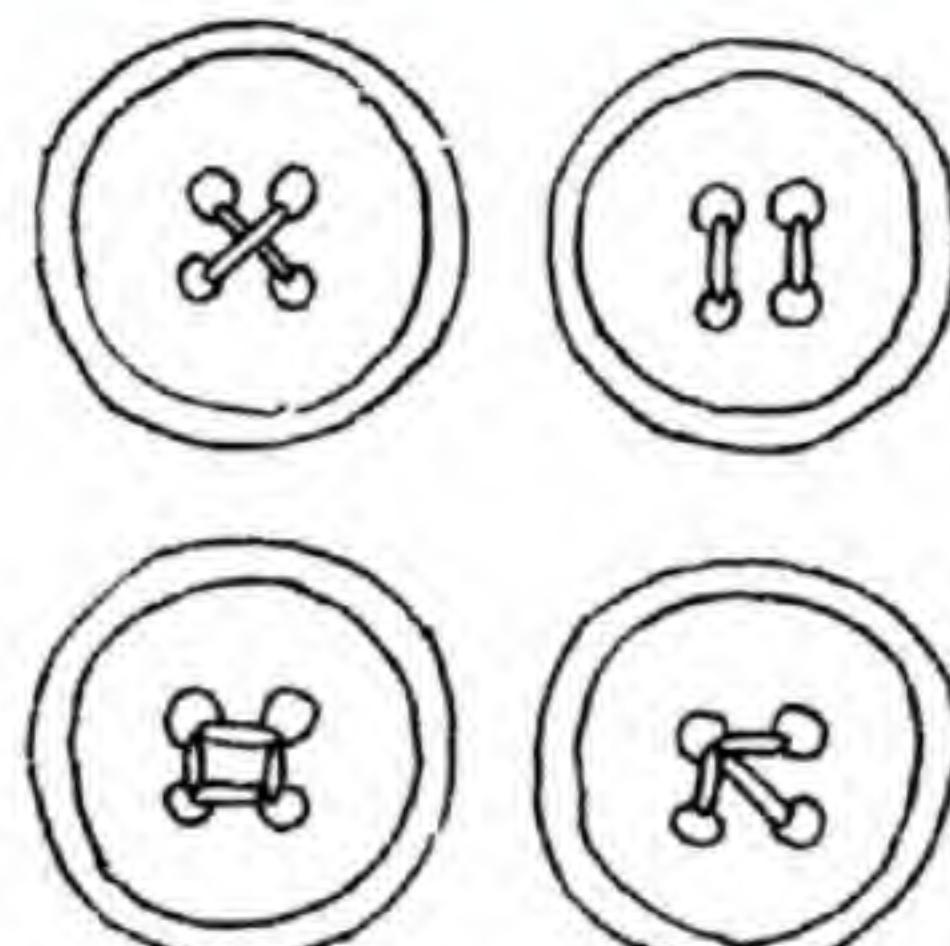


FIG. 2



FIG. 3

SEWING A FLAT BUTTON TO FINE FABRIC

Use an ordinary sewing thread but double it up – cut twice the length you need, then fold it in half. Thread the two ends through the eye of your needle, then you are left with a loop at the other end. To secure the thread in the fabric, push the needle through the fabric exactly in the centre of where you want your button to be, then thread the point of your needle through the loop and pull. Work a couple of small stitches on top of each where the loop lies and it will be even more secure.

Pass your needle up through one hole of the button and down through the other into the fabric and repeat (fig. 1).

If your button has two holes, repeat this about six times until your button feels nice and secure. If your button has four holes then there are different ways to sew it on, depending on the pattern you want on the top of the button (fig. 2).

To finish, work a few small stitches on top of each other on the back of the fabric to secure the stitching.

SEWING A FLAT BUTTON TO THICK FABRIC

If the buttonhole the button will go through is on thick fabric you need to ensure it sits slightly away from the back

to give it a little movement when pushing it through the buttonhole. This is important with larger flat buttons too.

Sew the button on as before, but slide a needle or cocktail stick underneath the thread, as shown, so the button is sewn on loosely (fig. 3).

Wrap the thread three or four times around the loose thread underneath the button and take the needle down through the fabric, then fasten off (fig. 4).

SEWING ON A SHANK BUTTON

A shank button has a protruding shank at the back of the button, which keeps the button away from the fabric so all the layers of fabric sit flat when the button is through the buttonhole.

Attach the thread to the fabric in the centre of where the button is to be placed in the same way as with a flat button. Stitch through the shank and into the fabric six or seven times until it feels secure (fig. 5), then finish off the thread securely on the wrong side of the fabric.

MAKING BUTTONHOLES

You can make a buttonhole either by hand or machine, depending on the finished effect you want.

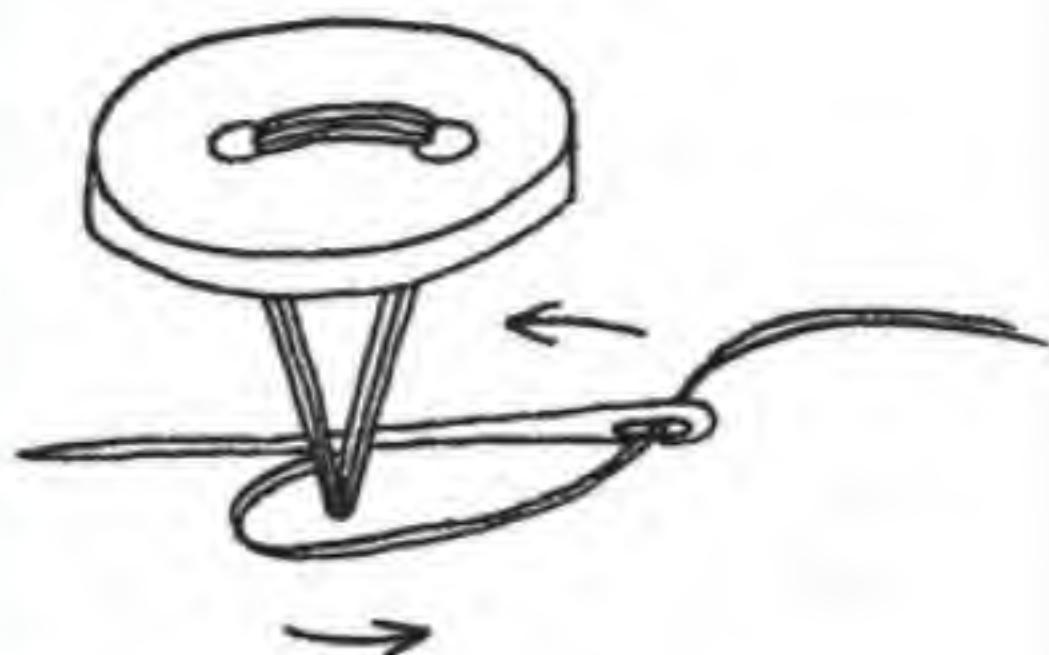


FIG. 4



FIG. 5

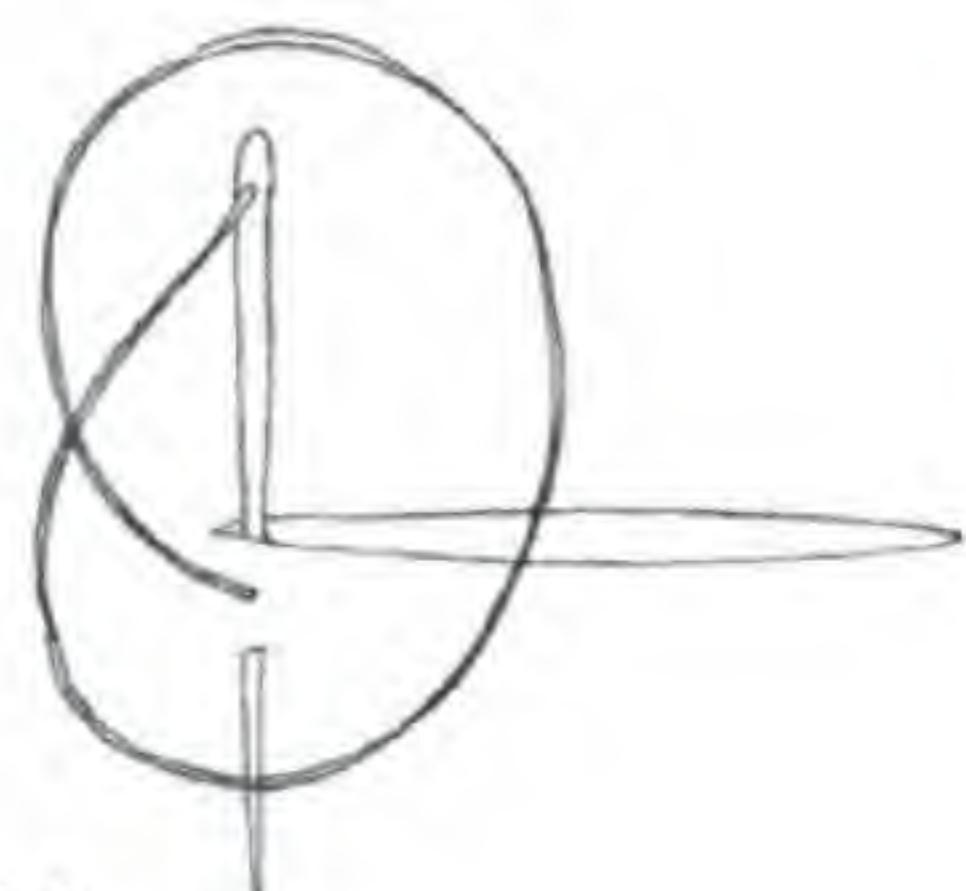


FIG. 6



FIG. 7

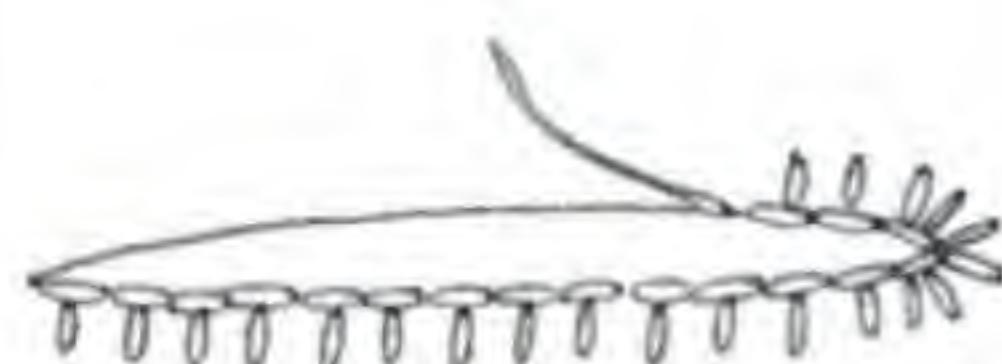


FIG. 8

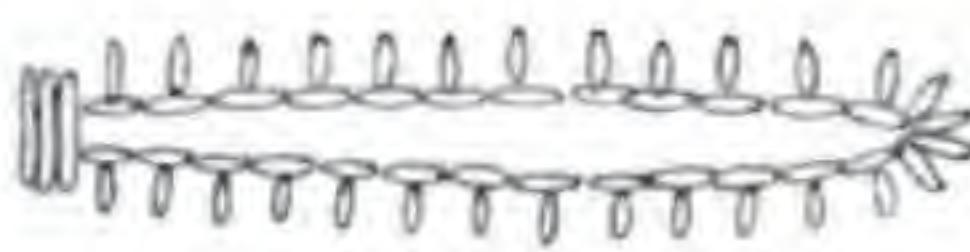


FIG. 9

To work out the length of a buttonhole, take the button diameter and add the button height then add 3mm (1/8in).

Decide where you want your finished button to lie on your item, then, using tailor's chalk, draw on the buttonhole line (which you calculated earlier) onto your fabric in this position to mark where the buttonhole will be stitched. The line will not be visible when you are finished so you can use a pen or pencil if you haven't any tailor's chalk to hand.

HAND-STITCHED BUTTONHOLES

Cut along the drawn line using small, sharp scissors. Secure the thread on the back of the fabric at one end of the cut line using small stitches (fig. 6). Work buttonhole stitch all along one side, making sure the looped end of the stitch is on the raw edge of the fabric (fig. 7). At the ends, work a semi-circle of buttonhole stitch then continue down the other side (fig. 8). Strengthen the end with a bar of short stitches close together (fig. 9).

MACHINE-STITCHED BUTTONHOLES

If your machine has a buttonhole foot and setting you can easily make buttonholes by machine. Your machine handbook will explain how to do this – settings do differ slightly from one machine to another, so follow your own manufacturer's.

Once you have stitched the buttonhole, use a seam ripper or a pair of very sharp scissors to cut the fabric inside the buttonhole – be really careful not to cut your stitches!

HOW TO MAKE SELF-COVERED BUTTONS

Self-covered button blanks can be bought in white plastic or metal in a range of diameters from 11-45mm (1/2-1 1/2in). They come on cards or loose in larger quantities. They're easy to cover without any tools, just a fabric scrap.



1 First cut the fabric into a circle with a diameter 1.5cm (1/2in) bigger than the button diameter.



2 Sew a gathering thread round the edge of the fabric, securing it at the beginning, then pull it up tightly and work a few stitches over each other to secure.



3 Snap the back part of the button blank in the centre of the back of the fabric to cover the gathered fabric entirely.

Envelope buttoned cushion

By Cheryl Owen

Sew up this eye-catching envelope cushion with sweet details – it's the perfect way to try out your new button skills!

This pretty cushion cover is simple to sew up, and it's a great beginner's project. We'll talk you through how to make an envelope opening, topped off with fabric-covered buttons to fasten your cushion case shut. We've made ours using two furnishing fabrics that complement each other, one with a chirpy bird print and the other in a matching colour. You can easily put your stamp on this project by switching the fabrics that you use to quickly alter the finished look. Equally, if you wanted to make your cushion bigger, simply adjust the dimensions we've listed below. You could even turn it into a super-sized floor cushion!

YOU WILL NEED

- Main fabric for back, lower front panel and buttons: 33x66cm (13x26in)
- Contrast fabric for upper front panel: 14.5x33cm (6x13in)
- Three buttons: 29mm (1¼in)
- Cushion pad: 30cm (12in) square
- Threads in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

30cm (12in) square

Seam allowance

1.5cm (½in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Little Book of Home Sewing Techniques
by Cheryl Owen

Author, fashion designer and dressmaker Cheryl Owen has packed her book full of simple sewing tutorials and contemporary projects for the home. It's great for beginners plus you get to try some next-step tricks like ruching, tassels and frills too!

Published by New Holland, £9.99
www.newhollandpublishers.com



CUTTING OUT YOUR FABRIC

For the cushion back, cut a 33cm (13in) square of your main fabric. For the lower front panel, cut a 29.5x33cm (12x13in) piece of the main fabric.

From the contrast fabric, cut a 14.5x33cm (6x13in) rectangle to make the upper front panel.



HOW TO MAKE THE ENVELOPE CUSHION

1 ENVELOPE OPENINGS

An envelope opening is a flap that closes over the front or back of your cushion cover. You can instantly make a feature of an envelope opening by using a contrast fabric then adding buttonholes and buttons for fastening.

2 HEM THE FRONTS

Take the lower front panel of main fabric and turn one long edge over by 1.5cm (1/2in) then 1.5cm (1/2in) again and press. Stitch into place, close to the edge. Repeat this with the contrasting upper front panel of fabric.

3 MARK BUTTONHOLES

Measure and mark three 3.5cm (1 3/8in) buttonholes on the contrasting front panel of fabric. To do this, first position the middle one 2cm (3/4in) in from the hemmed edge and centrally down the

front. Then mark the other two 8cm (3 1/4in) above and below the first one.

4 STITCH BUTTONHOLES

Now stitch the buttonholes either by hand or machine following our instructions on pages 70-71.

5 ASSEMBLE THE CUSHION

Take your cushion back piece of fabric and position it so that it's right side up. Now place the contrast upper front panel, right side down, on top – matching up the three raw edges. Place the lower front panel right side down on top, again matching the three raw edges to the cushion back.

6 STITCH TOGETHER

Pin all three pieces together and stitch all round the edge, allowing a 1.5cm (1/2in) seam. Clip the corners and turn right sides out. Now press well.

7 MAKE THE BUTTONS

Make three self-covered buttons using scraps of your main fabric (or choose another contrasting fabric if you prefer). To make these, cut a circular piece of fabric with a 4.5cm (1 3/4in) diameter, then follow our instructions on page 71 for how to cover a button.

8 ATTACH THE BUTTONS

Mark the position of the buttons under the buttonholes by placing them on to your cushion, then marking where the shank meets the lower front with a pin. Stitch each button carefully into place on to the lower front panel following our instructions on page 70.

9 TO FINISH

Insert the cushion pad and fasten the buttons to close and complete your envelope cushion.

All about... CASINGS

Little finishing touches go a long way to giving your projects a nifty finished feel! Add simple channels for threading cord or ribbon with our mini tutorials

Acasing, or drawstring channel, is simply a channel sewn through fabric layers to thread a length of ribbon or cord through so the finished item can be drawn up. This is most often used for the top of a drawstring bag and there are several ways of doing this.

MAKING A SIMPLE CASING

1 Once you have finished making your bag, fold the top of the fabric over 1.5cm (1/2in) to the wrong side, then fold it over again. This fold needs to be slightly deeper than twice the width of the ribbon, tape or cord you are going to thread through the casing so that it draws up easily and isn't too tight.

2 Stitch the folded-over fabric down, close to the edge of the final fold all round the top of your bag.

3 In order to make a gap to thread your ribbon through, snip the side seam stitches of the bag above your stitched casing line and secure the top and bottom of this gap with a few small hand stitches.



A pretty idea for the drawstring is to use ribbon or cord that matches the fabric of your bag. Pick out a colour or pattern and find a ribbon to match

4 Attach a safety pin to one end of your ribbon, or use a bodkin, and thread it all the way through your casing. Then tie the two ends of the ribbon in a knot a short distance away from where the two ends both emerge from the casing. Pull up the ribbon to close the bag.



MAKING A FRILLED CASING

This sort of casing gives a frilled edge above the casing channel for a pretty effect. The Toy Sack on p76 has a small frill, while the Delicate Little Bag on p78 has a larger one for a frillier look. A slightly different method is used for this bag but the effect is the same.

1 After making your bag, turn the top over 1.5cm (1/2in) to the wrong side all the way round.

2 Now turn the fabric over again but this time allow for the height you want your frill to be plus the allowance needed for the drawstring channel.

3 Stitch the turned-over fabric down close to the turned-over edge. Now stitch another line above this to the depth of the drawstring channel.

4 Snip the stitches in the seam between your two lines of stitching to open the channel up to accept the ribbon, and hand stitch to secure.

5 Thread your ribbon through the channel and knot the ends. When the drawstring is pulled up the fabric above the channel creates a frilled edge. For added interest, you could decorate the frill with lace.



Top tip

To make a small bag you'll find it easier if you remove the bed of your sewing machine before you stitch the casing – your manual will explain how



OTHER IDEAS

DOUBLE DRAWSTRING

- ➊ For a different effect and a more securely drawn-up bag, cut two lengths of ribbon to the length of the channel plus extra for knotting the ends.
- ➋ Snip the stitches between the casing lines on both sides of the bag.
- ➌ Thread one ribbon all the way through from one side and knot the ends. Thread the other length of ribbon from the other side, and knot the ends.
- ➍ Now pull up both lengths of the ribbon at the same time to close the bag.



TURN A BAG INTO A RUCKSACK

You can easily turn a simple, drawstring bag into a rucksack by cutting the ribbon or tape longer and attaching it to the bottom corners of the bag.

- ➊ After making your bag make a simple casing at the top and stitch it down.
- ➋ To make the corners more stable stitch a diagonal line a couple of inches in across the two bottom corners. Punch an eyelet in each bottom corner inside the diagonal stitched line.
- ➌ Undo the stitches on the side seams
- ➍ Cut two pieces of ribbon or cotton tape, each to the length of the casing plus twice the length of the bag. Add a few inches for knotting together.
- ➎ Thread one length through the casing all the way round then thread both ends through
- ➏ You now have two straps - when you pull up the tapes these can either be slung over a shoulder or worn on the back over both shoulders as a rucksack.



CASINGS WITH LINED BAGS

This method looks really effective on frilled casings, as the lining fabric of the bag will be seen on the inside of the frill.

- ➊ Make the bag outer and the bag lining in the same way as each other, but leave a small gap on the bottom seam of the lining, which will be needed later.
- ➋ Place the lining and outer bags right sides together, matching top raw edges and stitch all the way round the top
- ➌ Turn right sides out through the gap left in the lining seam, then push the lining inside the outer, and stitch up the gap.
- ➍ Now stitch your two lines of casing in the same way as the basic frilled casing.
- ➎ Snip the side seams, insert the ribbon - make either a single or double drawstring - then pull up the drawstring to close. You will then see the lining on the inside of the frill.



Bunting nursery toy sack

By Cheryl Owen

This jaunty drawstring bag is sure to inspire little ones to engage in some enthusiastic tidying up of their playthings!

This vintage-style toy sack is decked with a colourful row of bunting. It's a great opportunity to plunder your stash of off-cuts for a bright project that won't cost the earth to sew up.

The sack ties up at the top with a drawstring length of cord, sewn in place using a casing channel along the top edge. Use your finished bag as a handy room tidy to brighten up a child's bedroom, or if you can't bear to give it away, replace the fabrics with your favourite colours and turn it into a shopping bag or gym kit holder. It's fabulous for storing lingerie, too.

YOU WILL NEED

- Main fabric for bag: 40x120cm (16x47in)
- Three pieces of fabric in assorted prints and patterns for bunting: 20cm (8in) square
- Iron-on medium interfacing: 20x60cm (8x24in)
- Thick piping cord: 2m (2½yd)
- Thread in matching colours
- Sticky tape
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

45x35cm (18x14in)

Seam allowance

1.5cm (½in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Little Book of Home
Sewing Techniques
by Cheryl Owen

Author, fashion designer and dressmaker Cheryl Owen has packed her book full of simple sewing tutorials and contemporary projects for the home. It's great for beginners plus you get to try some next-step tricks like ruching, tassels and frills too!

Published by New Holland, £9.99
www.newhollandpublishers.com



CUTTING OUT YOUR FABRIC

To make the bunting, press iron-on interfacing onto the wrong side of three patterned fabrics. Use our bunting pattern below to cut out six triangles from this fabric.

For the bag, cut two pieces: 38x16cm (15x6 1/4in) for the lower section, and two pieces: 38x40cm (15x15 3/4in) for the upper section.



MAKING THE BAG



1

Pin three triangles in a row to each of the lower sections of the bag fabric – with right sides facing up. Match the top straight edges of the triangles to the long upper edges of the lower sections and butt the short edges of the triangles together, arranging them centrally across the fabric. Tack in place, as shown above.



2

Stitch each tacked edge of a lower section to one short edge of an upper section (with right sides facing and taking a 1.5cm (5/8in) seam allowance), to make the front and back of your bag. Neaten the seam with a zigzag stitch. Press the seam towards the bag. On the right side, topstitch 7.5 mm (1/8in) above the seam.

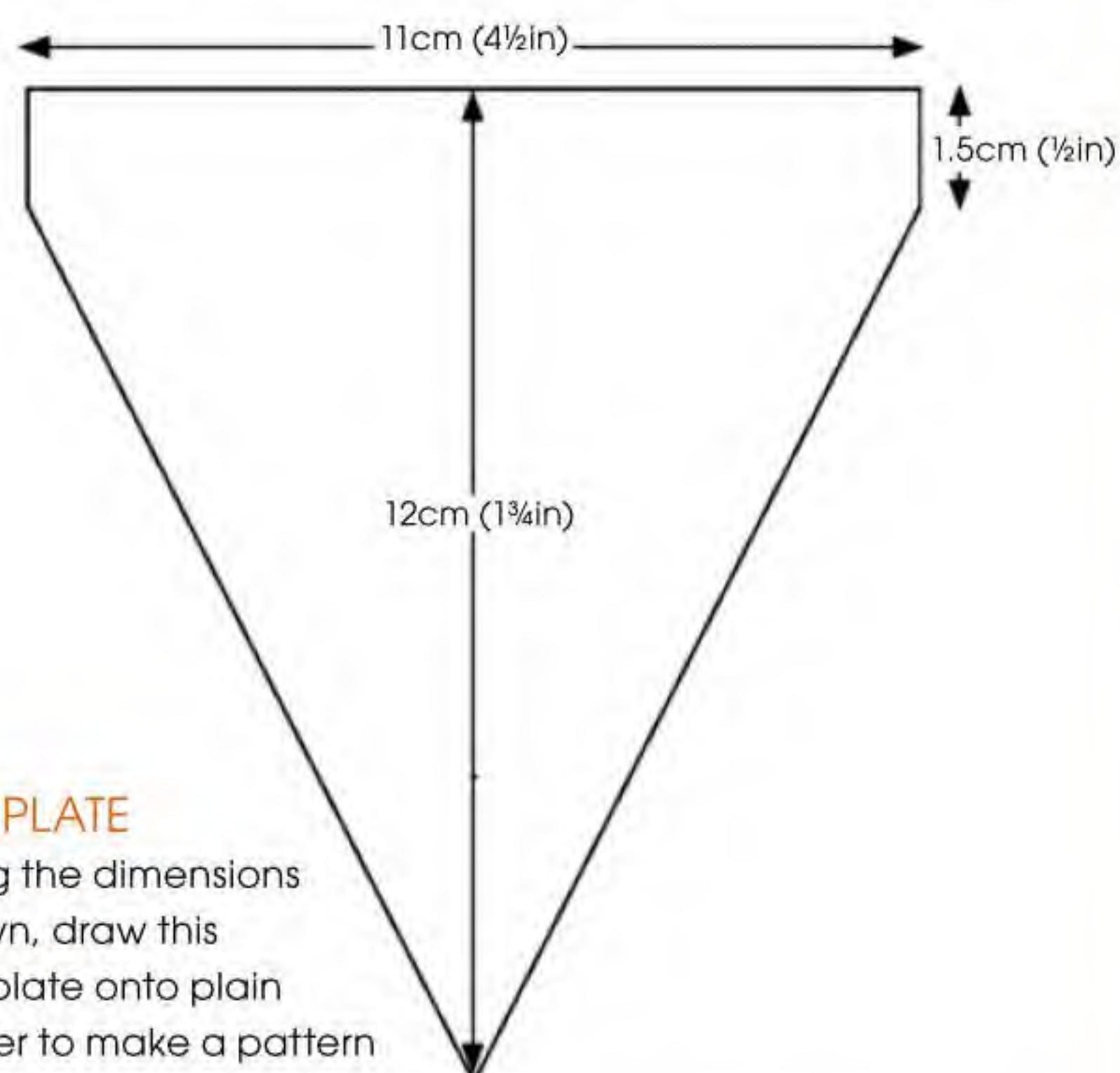
FINISHING THE BAG

Stitch the pieces together

Place the front and back sides of the bag together, right sides facing each other, and stitch them together down one side – stitching along the bottom and up the other side. To make a frilled casing, turn the top edge over 1cm (3/8in) to the wrong side and stitch down. Now turn over 5.5cm (2 1/4in) to the wrong side and press. To make the casing channel, work a line of machine stitching all the way round 2cm (3/4in) from the top edge, then 4cm (1 1/2in) from the top again.

Now finish off with some piping cord

Snip the stitches in the side seams between the two casing lines and oversew the top and bottom to secure. Cut your piping cord in half, then thread one half through the casing starting and finishing at one of the side seams and tie the ends together in a knot. Repeat with the other half but starting and finishing at the other side seam this time. Unravel and separate the strands of the cord ends below the knots.





Delicate drawstring bag

By Laura Wilhelm

Perfect for pyjamas, lingerie or scented petals, this pretty bag makes a perfect present... for you too, so give yourself a treat

Satin or silk are the ideal fabrics to use for this delicate drawstring bag, and you'll get an interesting effect with contrasting colours and patterns – why not try stripes or spots with florals, or bright, bold colours with pastels?

This bag is good practise for getting the hang of sewing casings. If it's your first time with casings, you can make the task a bit easier for yourself by omitting the ribbon in step 4, but it does make a gorgeous detail and really isn't too difficult.

If you've got pieces of fabric left over from other projects, this is a nice way to use them up. It's also a great way to collect a stash of delightful, but inexpensive, presents.

YOU WILL NEED



- Fabric for outer bag: 25x52cm (9¾x20½in)
- Fabric for inner bag: 39x52cm (15¼x20½in)
- Satin ribbon, 2cm (¾in) wide, 52cm (20½in) long
- Cord or ribbon, 1.5cm (½in) wide, 70cm (27½in) long
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

30x24cm (11¾x9in)

Seam allowance

1.5cm (½in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for a list of terms



Stylish Sewing
by Laura Wilhelm

You'll find ideas, patterns and instructions for 35 garments, bags, toys and home accessories. Garments include pyjamas, floaty skirts and dresses, plus myriad hats and bags... with matching make-up bags and technology cases. For the home there are squishy cushions, bolsters, table runners and napkins. Toys include the cutest ever miniature play houses.

Published by Search Press, PB, £12.99
www.searchpress.com



MAKING THE BAG

1

Cut out the pieces for the outer and inner bags. Fold the outer bag in half widthways, right sides together, then stitch together down the side and along the bottom. Repeat for the inner bag.

2

Turn the outer bag right side out. Fold the top edge of the inner bag towards the outside by 8cm (3¼in), then turn the edge under by 1cm (½in) for the seam allowance, press and tack.

3

Push the inner bag inside the outer bag so that the side seams meet. Place the seam allowance of the outer bag under the turned under trim of the inner bag.

4

Tack the satin ribbon onto the outer bag to make a decorative braid over the trim, then stitch into place.

5

Sew a second seam for the drawstring channel 2cm (¾in) up from the edge of the trim.

6

Make another small zigzag seam along the side seam, 2cm (¾in) long, with a stitch as narrow as for a buttonhole. Finish this off with straight stitch.

7

Undo the top layer of fabric of the side seam between the zigzag bar tacks. Thread through the cord or ribbon and sew or tie them together.

All about... INTERFACING

We explain how you can add body and structure to your makes with the help of a secret layer of stiffening which is really easy to do

Interfacing adds body to textile items. It is an additional unseen layer, which you can use in projects to strengthen and support the fabric or prevent it from stretching out of shape. It is used a lot in dressmaking to stiffen different parts of garments, but is also really useful in home and craft sewing. There is quite a choice of different types, though, so read this handy guide to choosing and using interfacing.

IRON-ON OR SEW-IN INTERFACING?

There are two types of interfacing: iron-on (fusible) and sew-in (non-fusible). They are used for different things so you need to choose the right one for the job.

Iron-on interfacing is the easiest to use as it is ironed to the wrong side of the fabric so will stay in place while you are working with it. You can use it for most fabrics and finished items.

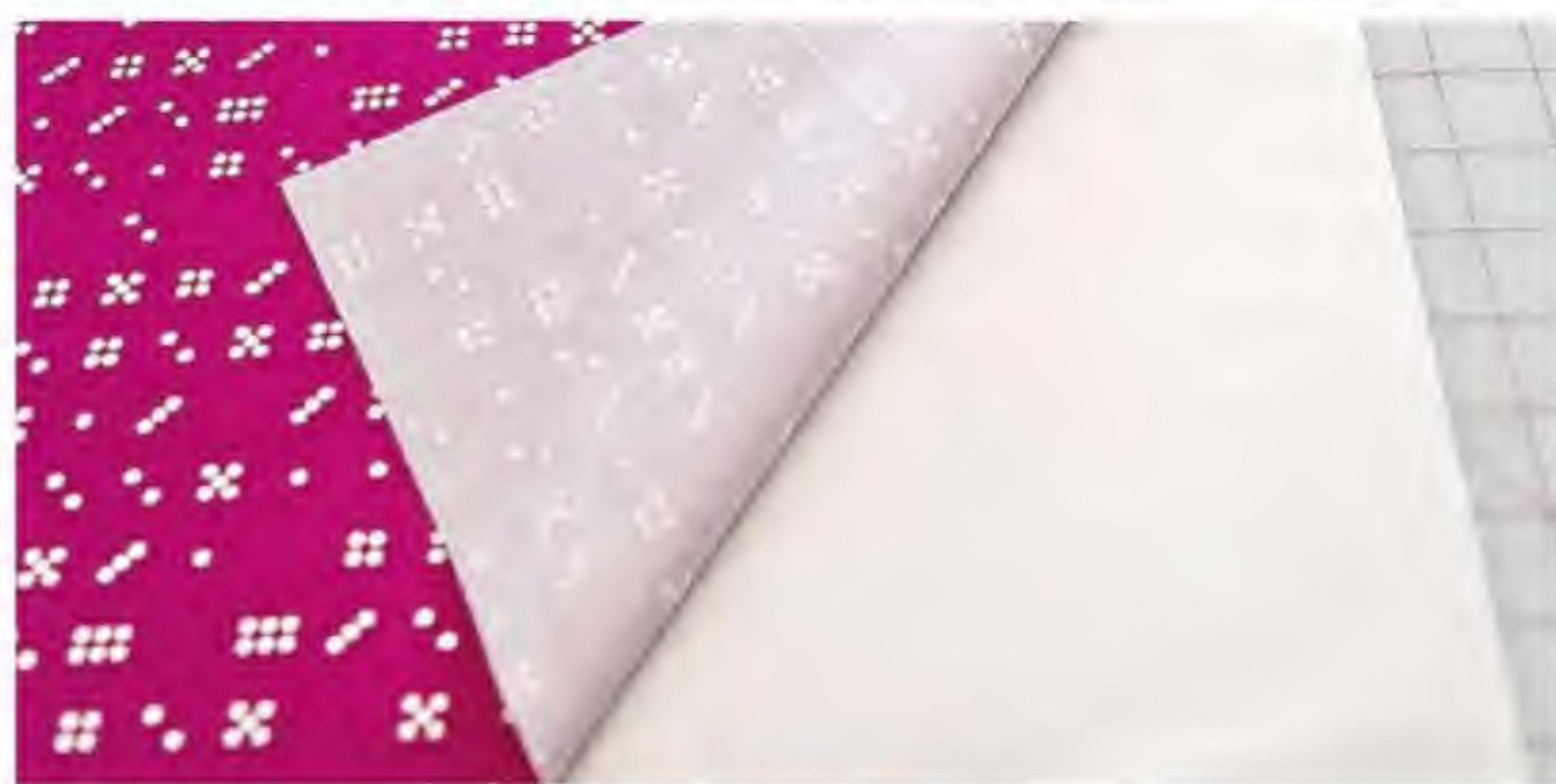
Sew-in interfacing is best used for:

- ➊ Really textured fabrics as the glue won't stick very well
- ➋ Fabrics such as velvet and fur as pressing will flatten the nap of the fabric
- ➌ Heat-sensitive fabrics, which could melt when ironed, such as vinyls and metallic fabrics
- ➍ Very open weave fabrics, such as lace or net, where the glue might come through to the right side

NON-WOVEN OR WOVEN INTERFACING?

Non-woven interfacing is the most popular interfacing to use as it is made by bonding fibres together and therefore it has no grain that needs to be matched with the grain of your fabric. This makes it really economical as you can cut it, stick it, or sew it on in any direction.

Woven interfacing has a grain, just like woven fabric, so it's really important to cut the interfacing piece in the same direction as the fabric. Although it's less economical than woven interfacing it works better with really fine fabrics such as silk, as it will drape better than interfacing without a grain.



WHICH WEIGHT TO USE?

Always buy an interfacing that feels the same weight as the fabric you will be attaching it to or just a little bit lighter. Remember that iron-on interfacing will become stiffer once it's been pressed

and the glue dries. When you buy your interfacing ask for advice or just feel the thickness and choose which one feels about the same as the fabric you are using. Use this table as a guide.

WEIGHT	USE FOR	WHICH FABRIC
Light	Small areas of garments like collars, pockets, flaps etc; ideal for putting behind lightweight fabrics you want to embroider on to give it more body	Delicate fabrics such as silk, viscose and acetate
Medium	Facings for dresses, waistcoats, jackets and coats as well as collars, pockets, flaps, etc; good for adding a little body to cotton bags	Light- to medium-weight fabrics such as pure cotton, wool or raw silk, velvet, corduroy, and metallic fabrics
Heavy	Coats and jackets; it's the most common interfacing for bags to add structure to the sides or bottom	Wools, tweeds, heavy cotton fabrics
Ultra Heavy	Fabric baskets and bowls, cap peaks, bag bottoms; doesn't crease easily so will keep its strength; makes bags stand up but feels soft	Thick felt fabrics or canvas

Top tip
Use interfacing designed for knitted fabrics when stretch and support are needed for jersey fabrics



Interfacing adds body to textile items, helping them to hold their shape

Top tip
The wool setting on your iron is about right for most fabrics but always start low and gradually increase the heat

HOW TO USE IRON-ON

Whenever you use iron-on interfacing, always test a small piece on a scrap of fabric first to make sure it's the right weight and doesn't add more stiffness than you need.

Look at the interfacing and you will see it has a shiny side and a matt side. The shiny side has the glue on it.

1 Place your main fabric wrong side up on your ironing board, then place the interfacing glue side down over it. If you're using woven interfacing make sure the grain of the fabric and interfacing follow the same direction.



2 Place a damp cloth (like a tea towel) over the fabric and interfacing, then press your iron on top of it. Hold the iron in place for 10 to 15 seconds then move it. Lift and press - don't glide the iron or this will shift the interfacing.

3 You don't need to use the steam setting of your iron as the damp cloth will provide the steam as well as protect the fabric and interfacing. Every now and then, lift your cloth and check to see if the interfacing is firmly glued in place. If not, keep pressing until it is.

HOW TO USE SEW-IN

Place the interfacing on the wrong side of your fabric then tack together all round the edge. You can either cut the fabric and interfacing to shape then tack them together, or tack the interfacing to the fabric then cut round it afterwards – it depends how small or fiddly the shape is. If you are interfacing a particularly large piece of fabric then it's best to work diagonal lines of tacking across it to really hold it in place. Just remember to remove them after you have finished making up.

BONDING WEB

This is an interfacing that works like double-sided tape and is perfect for hand or machine appliquéd.

- It has a paper backing, which you draw the shape you want to appliquéd on (in reverse though!) but don't cut it out yet.
- Iron the bonding web on to your fabric – paper side up. Once it is firmly stuck, cut out the shape round the drawn lines and peel off the paper backing.
- Turn the shape over and press it on to the fabric you want to appliquéd the shape to. Now stitch it on by hand or machine for a permanent fix.

COLOURED INTERFACING

Interfacing comes in two colours: light (white) or dark (charcoal). Choose the one that won't show through the main fabric.



Handy felt baskets

By Lola Nova

Useful for storing essentials and lovely to look at, too... every home needs a pair of these stylish and sturdy baskets

These versatile baskets, in two sizes, will soon become essentials. You'll find homes in the kitchen for tea, garlic, gadgets and much more. They're also good for the bathroom, the kids' rooms, and home offices. They can be made up in cotton, linen, corduroy and wool instead of felt.

YOU WILL NEED

For each basket:

- Two sheets of felt in different colours: 30.5x46cm (12x18in)
- One sheet of felt in a third colour: 23x30.5cm (9x12in)
- Heavyweight fusible interfacing
- Ribbon: 1.5-2.5cm (½-1in) wide, 25cm (10in) long
- Threads in matching colours
- Fabric marker
- Button or other embellishment (optional)
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

Large: 12x7cm (6x2¾in)

Small: 9x5.75cm (3½x2¼in)

Seam allowance

1cm (½in) included

Note

Instructions are for the large basket; differences for the small basket are in square brackets

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Simple Sewing with Lola Nova
by Alexandra Smith

As the title suggests, everything in this collection of 25 projects, beautifully photographed by Yuki Sugiura, is designed to be easy to make and the emphasis is on having fun while doing so. Chapters are arranged into Boho, Natural, Vintage, Eclectic and Whimsy, and you'll find step-by-step instructions for each of the projects, including things to wear and things for the home. Published by Mitchell Beazley, HB, £16.99

www.octopusbooks.co.uk



CUTTING THE FABRIC

FOR THE LARGE BASKET:

Exterior: cut one 30.5cm (12in) square from one colour of felt, and two 7.5x30.5cm (3x12in) strips from the smaller sheet of felt.

Lining: cut one 30.5x41cm (12x16¼in) rectangle from one sheet of felt, and one 30.5x38cm (12x15in) rectangle of fusible interfacing.

FOR THE SMALL BASKET:

Exterior: cut one 20x25cm (8x10in) rectangle from one colour of felt, and two 7.5x25cm (3x10in) strips from the smaller sheet of felt.

Lining: cut one 25x31cm (10x12¼in) rectangle from one sheet of felt, and one 25x28cm (10x11in) rectangle of fusible interfacing.

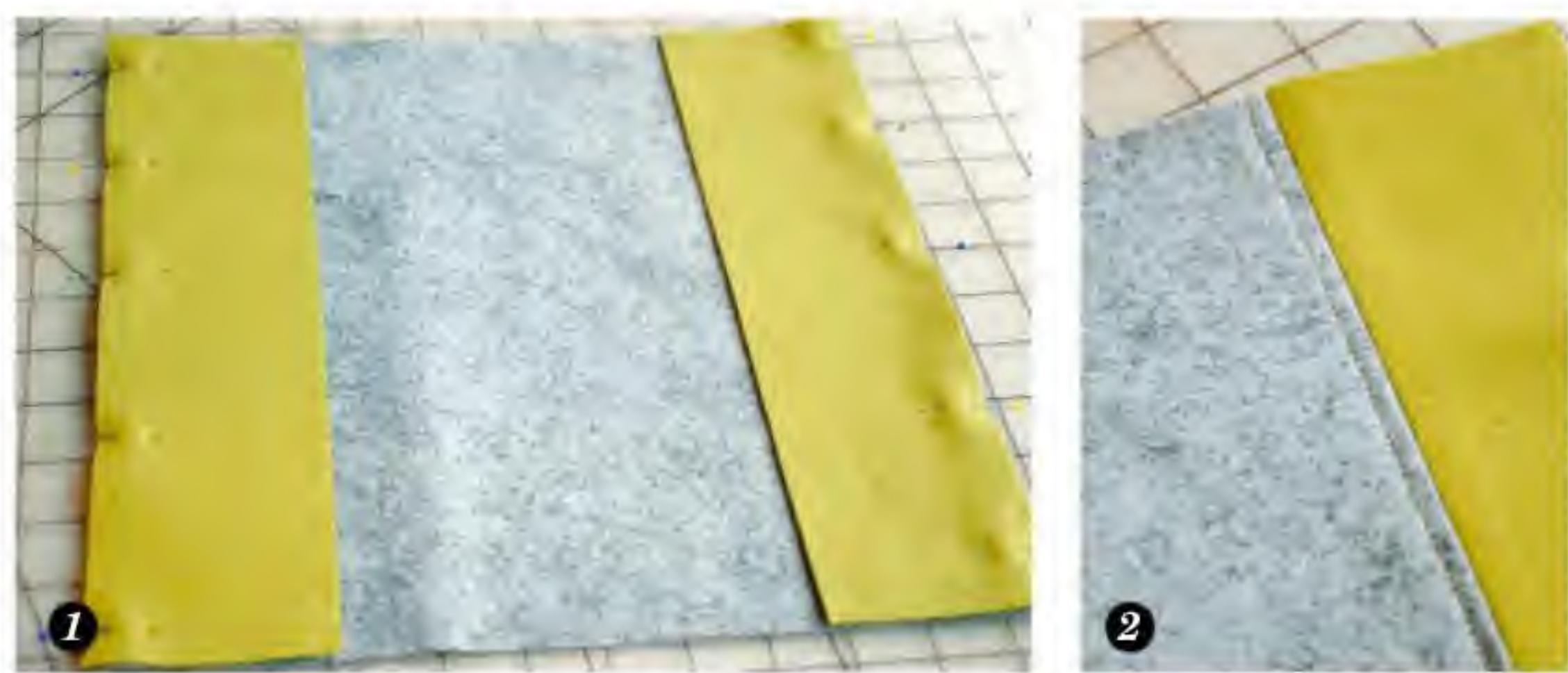
Top tip
A great thing about felt is that cut edges don't fray – a rotary blade is the best tool for cutting felt



SEWING THE OUTER

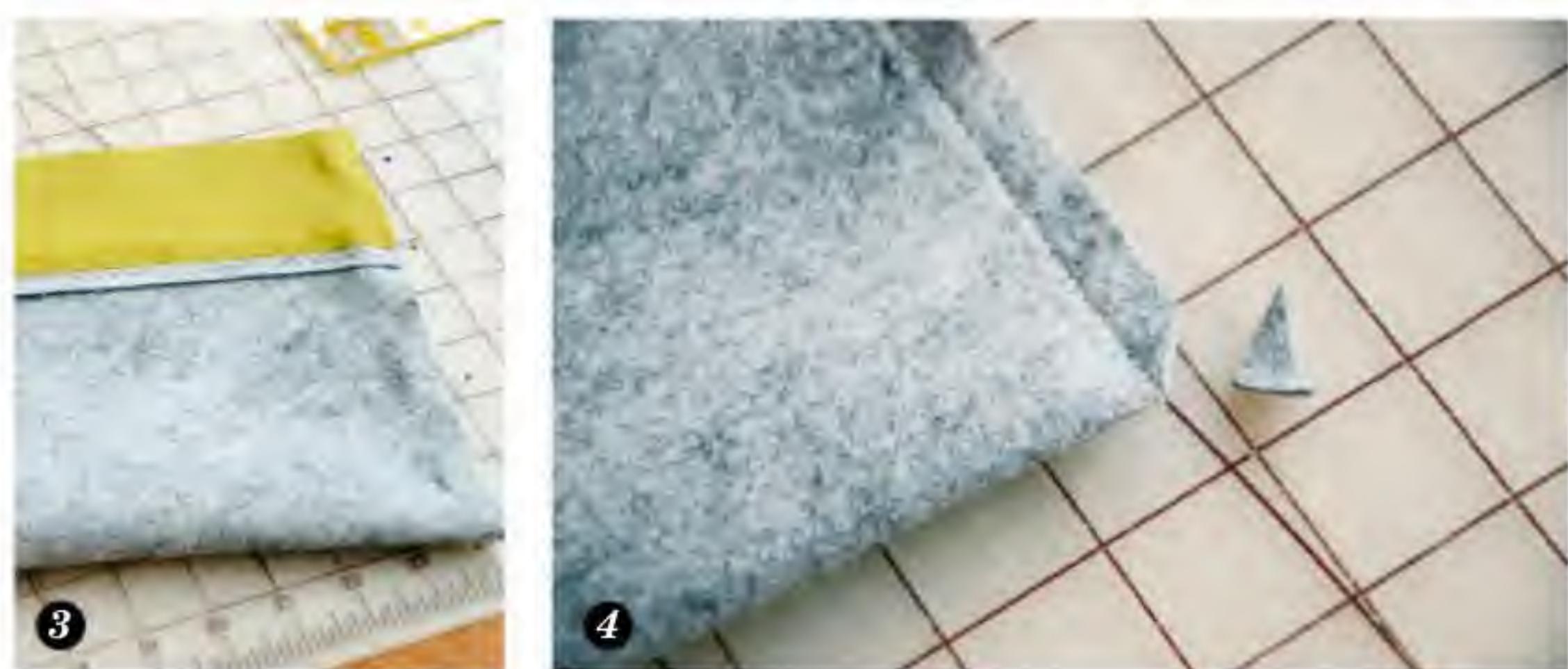
1 PIN THE PIECES

Pin each of the two 7.5x30.5cm (3x12in) (7.5x25cm (3x10in)) felt strips on either side of the 30.5x30.5cm (12x12in) (20x25cm (8x10in)) felt piece, matching edges (fig.1).



2 STITCH PIECES TOGETHER

Stitch along the pinned allowance, back-stitching at the beginning and end of your seam. Press the seams open and topstitch close to both seams (fig. 2).



3 FOLD AND PIN

Fold the sewn felt piece in half, right sides together, edges matching with the strips of felt at the top. Pin both sides of the folded piece, as shown (fig. 3).

4 STITCH AND PRESS

Stitch along both pinned sides, back-stitching at the beginning and end. Clip the bottom corners of the seam allowance on both sides and press the seams open (fig. 4).



SEWING THE LINING

FUSE INTERFACING

Centre the fusible interfacing on the largest felt rectangle and fuse in place following the manufacturer's instructions.

STITCH TOGETHER

Fold the interfaced rectangle in half across the width with right sides together. Follow steps 3-4 of the outer and 5-8 of the boxed corners. Leave the lining the wrong side out.

MAKING THE BASKETS

5

Pull the the bottom corner of the seam and pinch into a triangle, ensuring you centre the seam. You may choose to place a pin into the triangle to keep it from shifting as you work.

Using a seam gauge or ruler, measure 7.5cm (3in) (5cm (2in)) from the tip of the triangle and make a mark with a fabric marker in the centre of the seam. Draw a straight line across at the 7.5cm (3in) (5cm (2in)) mark (fig. 5).

6

Repeat this process for the other corner (fig. 6).



Top tip

If using the baskets for things that might mark (like art materials), try a wipe-clean fabric for the lining

7

Stitch along the lines you have just drawn, back-stitching at the beginning and end of your seams. Trim away the excess triangle, ensuring you don't cut through your stitches (fig. 7).

8

Fold over 1.5cm (1/2in) at the top of the basket and press (fig. 8). Turn the basket right side out.

9

Tuck the basket lining inside the basket exterior, matching side seams and the top edge. Cut two 11.5cm (4 1/2in) lengths of ribbon and fold them in half. Tuck the raw edges of the ribbon between the exterior and lining at the side seams and pin in place. Pin the lining and exterior together around the entire top edge of the basket (fig. 9).

10

Topstitch approx 6mm (1/4in) from the top edge around the entire basket (fig. 10) – this will secure the ribbon handles in place. Add a hand-sewn button or other embellishment, if you so desire.

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Hand Sewing Techniques

Sewing by hand is one of our most traditional skills and is wonderfully therapeutic too. Learn the basic skills and some clever tips needed for patchwork, appliqué and embroidery.



All about... PATCHWORK

Hand sewn patchwork is perfect for using up all those fabric scraps to make an heirloom piece, and the hand stitches used are really simple too

Patchwork sewn by hand is also known as 'English paper piecing'. It is the process of folding fabric round paper templates, tacking them in place, stitching them all together, then remove the papers to reveal beautiful pieces of hand-stitched patchwork.

MATERIALS AND TOOLS

PAPER

You can make your paper shapes in any one of three ways:

- Draw your shape onto paper using a reasonably heavyweight paper so that it's thick enough to hold its shape but thin enough to be flexible while stitching.
- Print shapes out on your computer, then cut round them. Search online to find websites that will give you free shapes to print out.
- Buy pre-cut papers to save you time.

FABRIC

100% cotton fabric works best, as it is crisp and will fold round the paper well,



and won't fray easily. You can use other fabrics too but it's best to stick to the same weight fabrics for your whole piece so they sit together properly.

For a memory or heirloom patchwork quilt, cut fabric from favourite pieces of clothing you no longer wear – it will forever remind you of them.

Always wash and press all your fabric before you begin – this is because fabric can shrink at different rates, plus it's much easier to cut and sew with crisp, newly pressed fabric.

THREAD

You can use any thread, but make sure it matches the fabrics as your stitches will be very slightly visible.

NEEDLES

You need to use a sharp-pointed needle so you pierce just the fabric and not the paper. Short needles work better as they will be easier to handle when working small stitches. 'Between' or crewel needles are ideal and it's worth investing in hard-wearing gold-plated ones.

1 STARTING OFF

First decide how big a piece of patchwork you want to make and what shape you want to use. Sketch it out roughly to decide the size of each shape and therefore how many paper pieces you will need. The size of shape you will cut out from your paper piece will be the finished size of the patch once the fabric is tacked round so that's fairly easy to work out.

2 CUTTING OUT THE PAPER TEMPLATES

Once you have worked out how many shapes you need, cut them all out from paper or print them out if you prefer.

3 CUTTING OUT THE FABRIC

The fabric you will tack round your templates needs to be bigger – 6mm (1/4in) all the way round is about right. It's best to make a fabric template too by drawing a bigger shape. Cut this from card and use it to draw round your fabric. You could make a template instead from thin plastic then you can cut round it with a rotary cutter if you prefer. If you do this, you can stack several layers of fabric and cut them all out together round the template, to save you a lot of time. You can either plan exactly what colours and patterns you want at the beginning and cut them to suit your placement or just cut fabrics you like which you think will blend together more randomly.

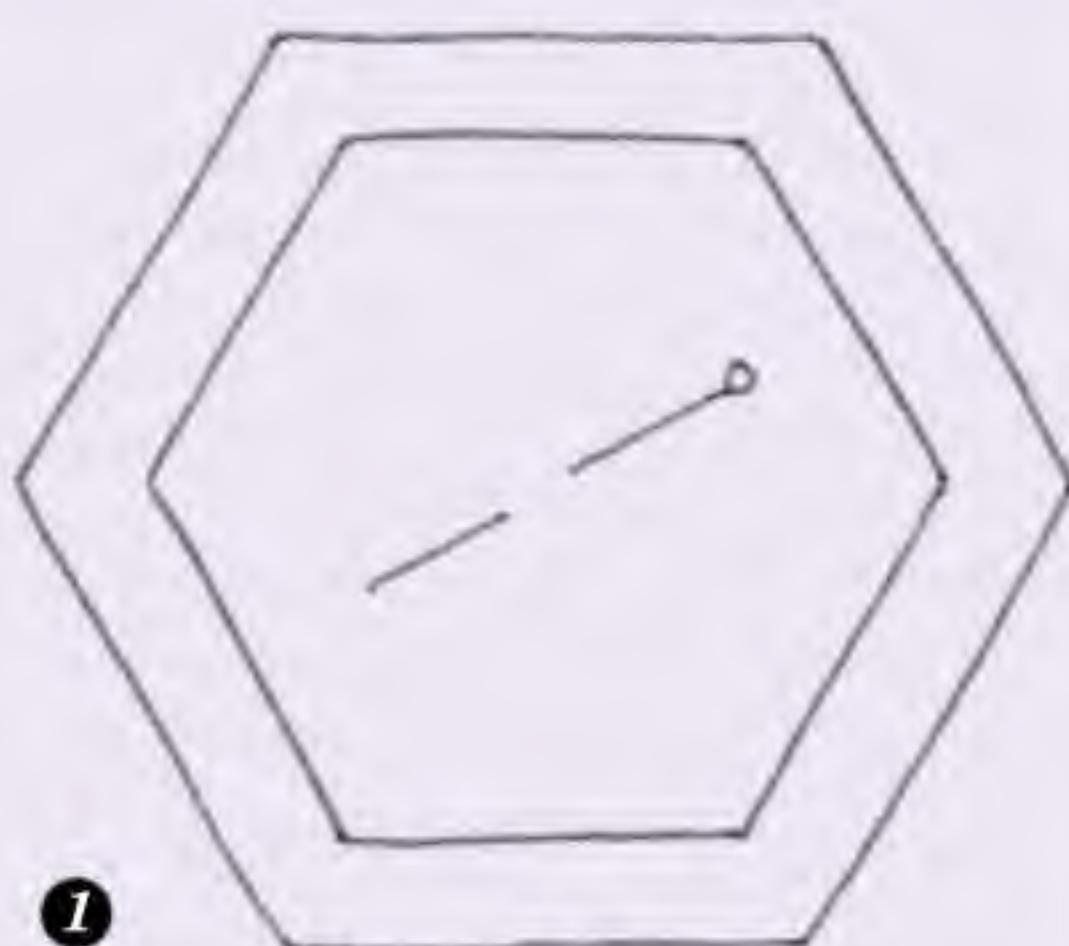




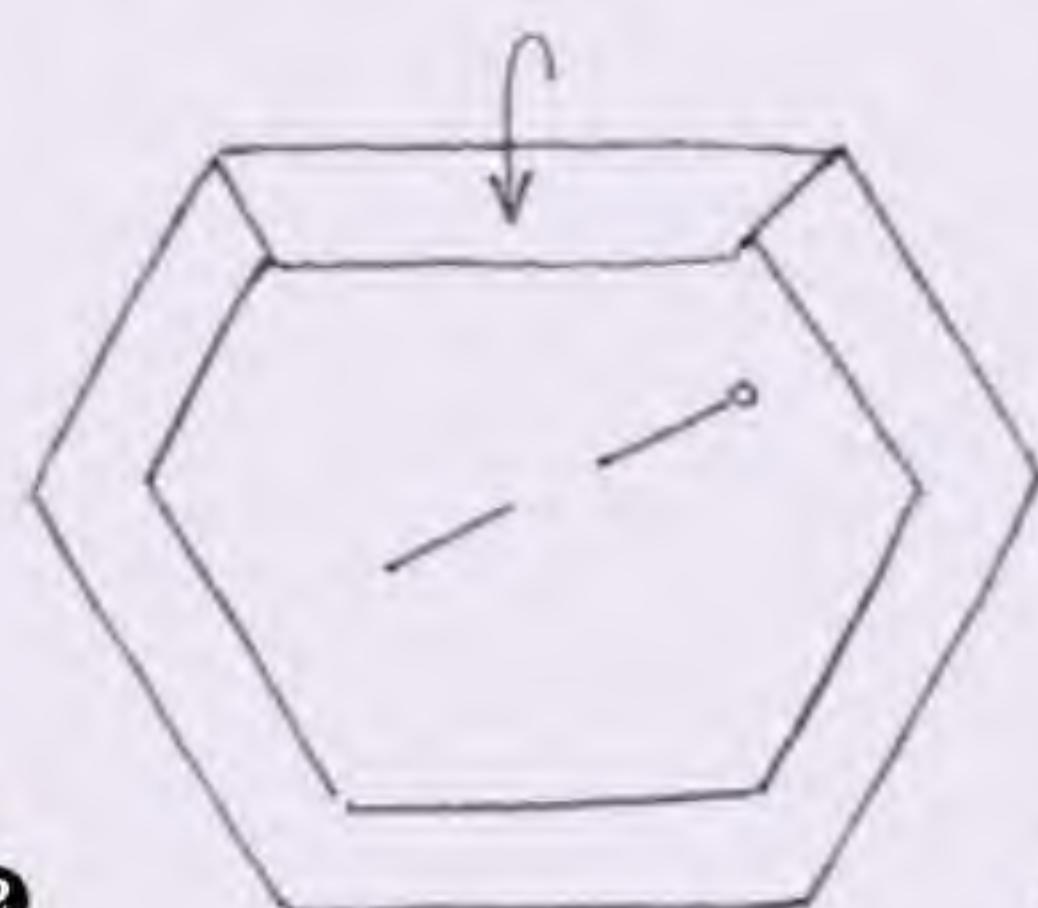
TACKING THE FABRIC IN PLACE

Now you need to tack all the fabric shapes round your paper shapes. This process is time consuming but really part of the process so work methodically and your pile of fabric-covered shapes will soon grow!

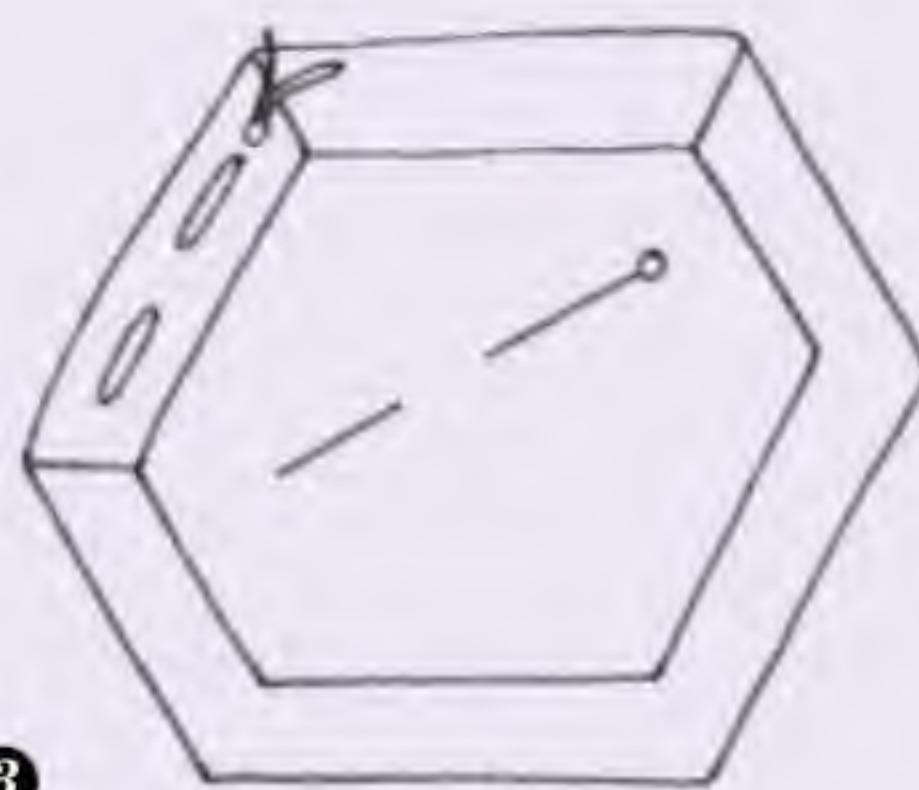
Place the paper template in the centre of the wrong side of the fabric shape (fig. 1). Fold the fabric edges round the template (fig 2). You can pin them into place first or fold the edges and stitch as you go (fig3).



1



2



3

SEWING THE PATCHES TOGETHER

Take two of your fabric shapes that will be placed side by side and place them right sides together. Start by stitching two sides together, which need to sit next to each other.

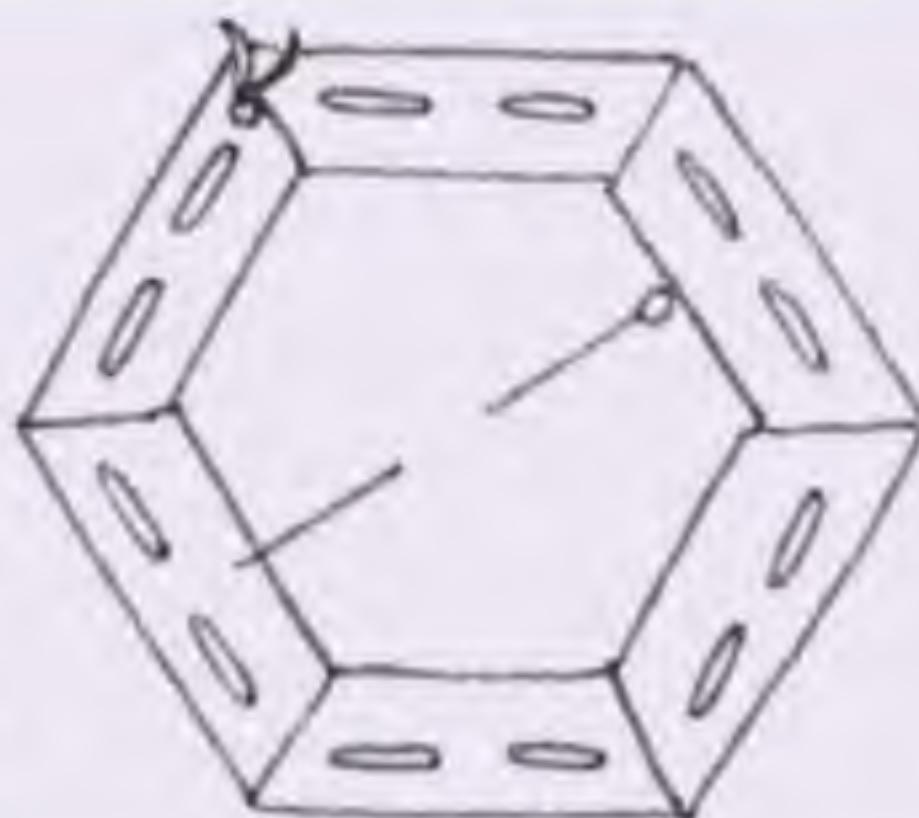
Stitch through the fabric that runs along the edge of the paper piece, being careful not to sew through the paper itself. Try to make your stitches small so they aren't too visible. The best stitch to use for this is a whip stitch, or oversewing.

Continue joining all your pieces together in this way working on one seam at a time until it is complete.



SEWING ANGLES

For shapes with narrow angles, like this hexagon, leave the excess fabric 'flapping' as this will be on the back of your work once you have sewn the pieces together. If you are making diamonds or triangles, the fabric flaps will be even larger so you will find it easier to trim them a little or tack them well out of the way so they don't get caught in the stitches when you are joining all your patches together.



HOW TO WORK WHIP STITCH

Secure your thread at the edge of the fabric by working three or four tiny stitches on top of each other. Then push your needle through both layers of fabric, coming out at the top layer, and push it down through the bottom layer, angling the needle so it comes back up through the top layer about 3mm (1/8in) from the first stitch (fig. 4).

For the next stitch, push the needle vertically down through the bottom layer, angling it so it comes out diagonally through the top layer.

Continue in this way all along the two fabric layers (fig. 5), securing your final stitch in the same way as at the beginning. All your stitches should be parallel and spaced evenly apart.



4



5

Little hexagon quilt

By Helen Philipps

Perfect for using up scraps of your favourite fabrics, this mini quilt is an ideal first patchwork project, and makes a lovely gift

This gorgeous doll's quilt is made using the English paper piecing technique, which involves copying hexagonal templates on to pieces of scrap paper and tacking fabric around them to make hexagons for patchworking. Use scraps of floral, striped and polka dot fabrics in an array of colours for maximum visual interest. The red bias binding and matching spotty buttons add a striking finishing touch and the quilt can be flipped over to reveal a bright and bold backing fabric.

YOU WILL NEED

- Two pieces of fabric for front and back: 40x36cm (16x14½in)
- Wadding: 40x36cm (16x14½in)
- Scraps of assorted colourful, printed fabrics
- Bias binding
- Curved quilting pins
- Thread in assorted colours
- Stranded cotton in assorted colours
- Four buttons
- Thin card
- Scrap paper
- Sharp pencil
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

37.5x33cm (14¾x13in)

Seam allowance

6mm (¼in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Pretty Patchwork Gifts
by Helen Philipps

There's more to patchwork than quilting, and Helen Philipps' ingenious designs let you make brooches, boxes, toys and more. Over 25 projects are easy to follow, with step-by-step instructions and clear patterns. And it's not just patchwork skills you'll be learning, but appliqué and embroidery too. Once you've finished every gift you'll want to make another to keep!

Published by David & Charles, PB, £14.99

www.stitchcraftcreate.co.uk





SEWING THE PATCHWORK

1

Using the template, trace the hexagon on to thin card. Place the card template onto a piece of scrap paper and draw around it carefully with a sharp pencil. Repeat 59 times on the same sheet of paper and carefully cut out the hexagons.

2

Cut out the fabric pieces, leaving a 6mm (1/4in) seam allowance all the way around. Fold the fabric neatly around the paper hexagons and tack in place.

3

Join the hexagons by placing them right sides together and oversewing the seams with small stitches. Keep joining the hexagons until the arrangement matches the diagram above. Remove the papers and press the patchwork, keeping the hems on the outer edges turned under.

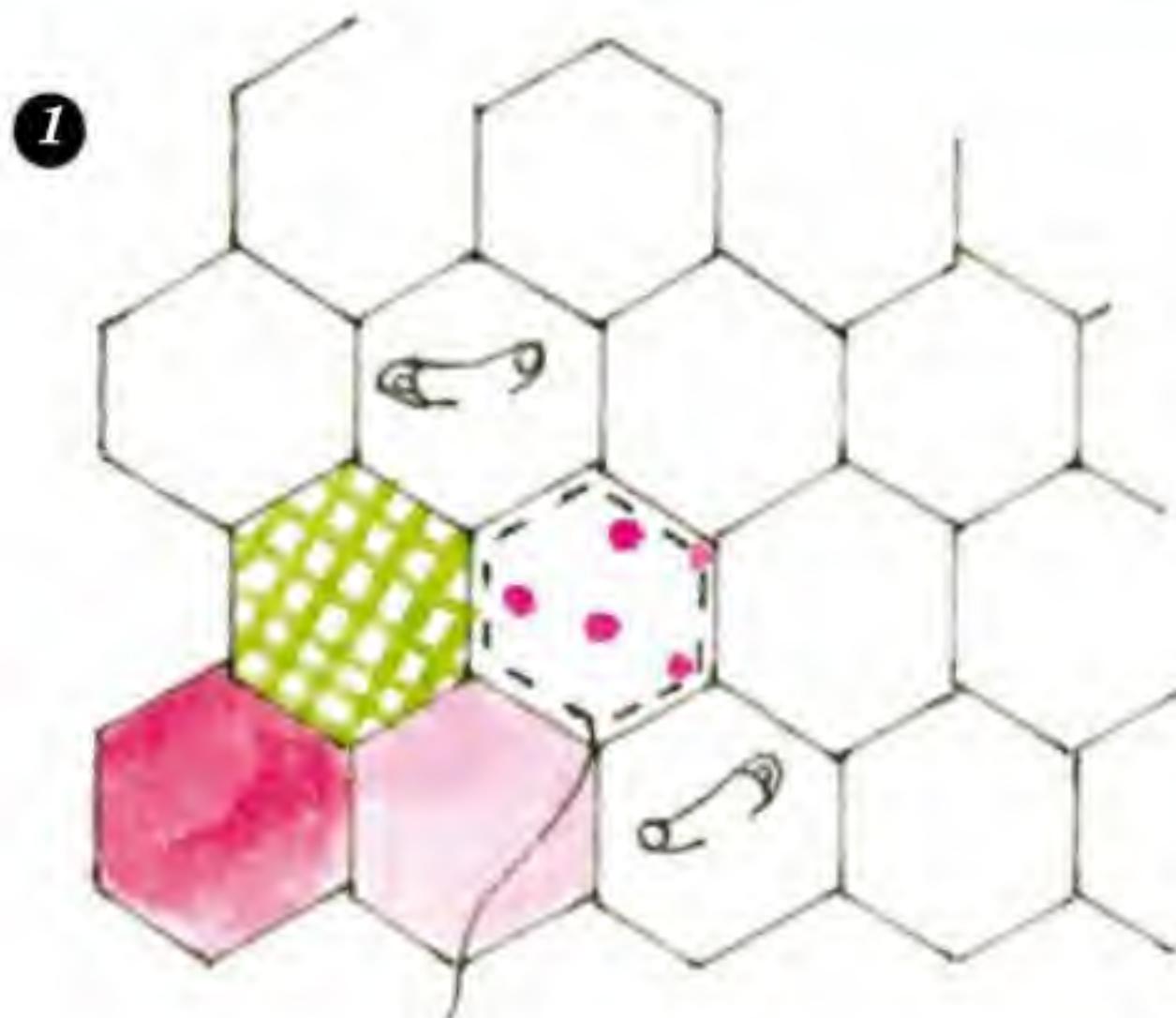
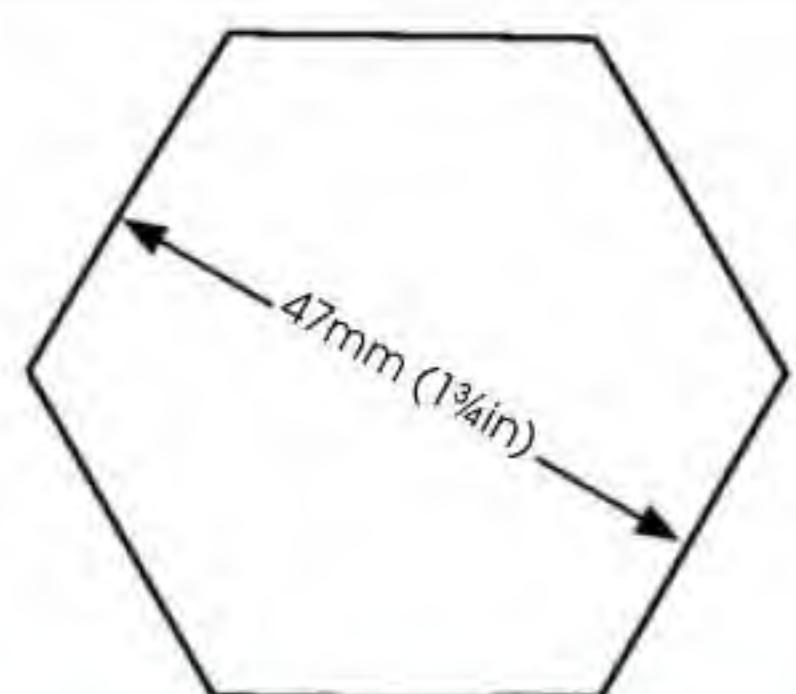
4

Place the patchwork in the centre of the white fabric, pin it in position, then slip stitch it in place around the outer edges of the patchwork.



TEMPLATE

Using the dimensions shown, draw the template onto plain paper to make a pattern



MAKING THE QUILT

1

Take the backing fabric and the wadding and make a quilt sandwich, with the patchwork on the top, the backing fabric on the bottom and the wadding in the middle. Pin the layers together with curved safety pins to hold them securely in place (fig. 1).

2

Using white cotton, quilt around each hexagon (fig. 2), smoothing the layers and moving the quilting pins as you go. When all the hexagons are quilted, use two strands of red stranded cotton to sew a decorative running stitch around the outside of the hexagon patchwork (fig. 2).

3

To finish the white border, stitch a line of simple white quilting stitch from the point of each hexagon to the outer edge of the quilt (fig. 3).

4

Bind the quilt with bias binding (fig. 4) – see p44 to find out how to bind fabric – and sew a pretty button on to each corner for decoration.





All about... APPLIQUÉ

Adorn clothes, fashion accessories and home décor items by stitching on decorative patches... personalise your makes with motifs, letters and pretty shapes

The word appliquéd comes from the French verb *appliquer* which means 'to apply'. It is used to describe a technique used in many different crafts, such as quilt-making and pottery.

In sewing terms, the word appliquéd is used to describe a smaller fabric shape, which is cut out then stitched to larger piece of base fabric.

There are several methods for working hand-appliquéd and you should choose the one that not only suits your project, but also which you feel the most comfortable with and gives you your desired result.

RAW EDGE METHOD

This is the simplest appliquéd method, but does require neater stitching when you sew it on. It is the method used in both the Lollipop Flowers Picture on p96 and the Funky Monkey Pillow on p101.

REVERSED IMAGES

If your appliquéd shape isn't regular – for example, a letter of the alphabet that will only work in one orientation – then you must first reverse the shape. To do this,



first draw the shape in reverse onto a piece of tracing paper. The easiest way to do this is to trace the shape, then turn the tracing paper over and draw over the lines on the back. Use this reversed pattern shape to follow this method.

Top tip
You can use almost any embroidery stitch to attach appliquéd patches – experiment to find out what you like

WHAT IS FUSIBLE WEB?

Fusible web is a man-made fibre backed with glue that melts when heated. It's the fabric version of double-sided sticky tape! When placed between two pieces of fabric and heated, the fabrics stick together, making it ideal for appliquéd. To ensure it sticks, wash and dry both the base fabric and the appliquéd fabrics before you start. Fusible web has a paper backing on one side, which you can draw a shape on. The paper backing protects one sticky side while you press the other on the appliquéd fabric. You then remove the paper backing to stick the other to the base fabric. There are several different makes and weights – choose one which has a similar weight to your appliquéd fabric.

TURNED UNDER EDGE METHOD

For this method you hem the edges of your appliquéd shapes before you stitch them to the main base fabric. The best product to use for this is freezer paper, but you can use any thick paper instead.

1 First trace the appliquéd shape onto paper, making sure you leave space between shapes so there is room to cut them out. For freezer paper, trace the shape onto the non-shiny side.

2 Cut out the drawn shape, then cut your fabric 6mm (1/4in) bigger than the paper shape all the way round.

3 If you are using freezer paper, lay it shiny side up on to the wrong side of your appliquéd fabric.

4 Turn the edge of the fabric over onto the paper and iron them into place, snipping curves and corners as you go.

if needs be. The shiny side of the freezer paper will stick to the fabric. If you are using ordinary paper then just tack them into place (fig. 1).

5 Continue turning the edges over in this way until you have worked your way all round the shape (fig. 2).

6 Now turn your shape over to the right side and pin, then iron it into place onto your base fabric. If using freezer paper, the shiny side will hold it in place. Stitch it on using small neat stitches just through the very edge of the turned-over appliquéd fabric, taking care not to stitch through the paper (fig. 3).

APPLYING FUSIBLE WEB

So easy to use – fusible web simplifies the process of working appliquéd... follow our step-by-step guide for how to make the most of this handy product



1 DRAW YOUR SHAPE

First you trace the pattern shape onto the paper side of the fusible web.



2 CUT OUT THE SHAPE

Cut out the shape, leaving approximately 6mm (1/4in) around the shape.



3 GET THE IRON OUT

Iron the fusible web pieces, paper side up, onto the wrong side of the fabrics, then let them cool. Place a damp tea towel on top of the fusible web as this will help protect the web and stick the glue.



4 CUT AGAIN

Cut out the pieces along the traced lines.



5 IRON AGAIN

Remove the paper backing, then fuse the appliquéd pieces to your base fabric, again using a damp tea towel on top of the fabrics.

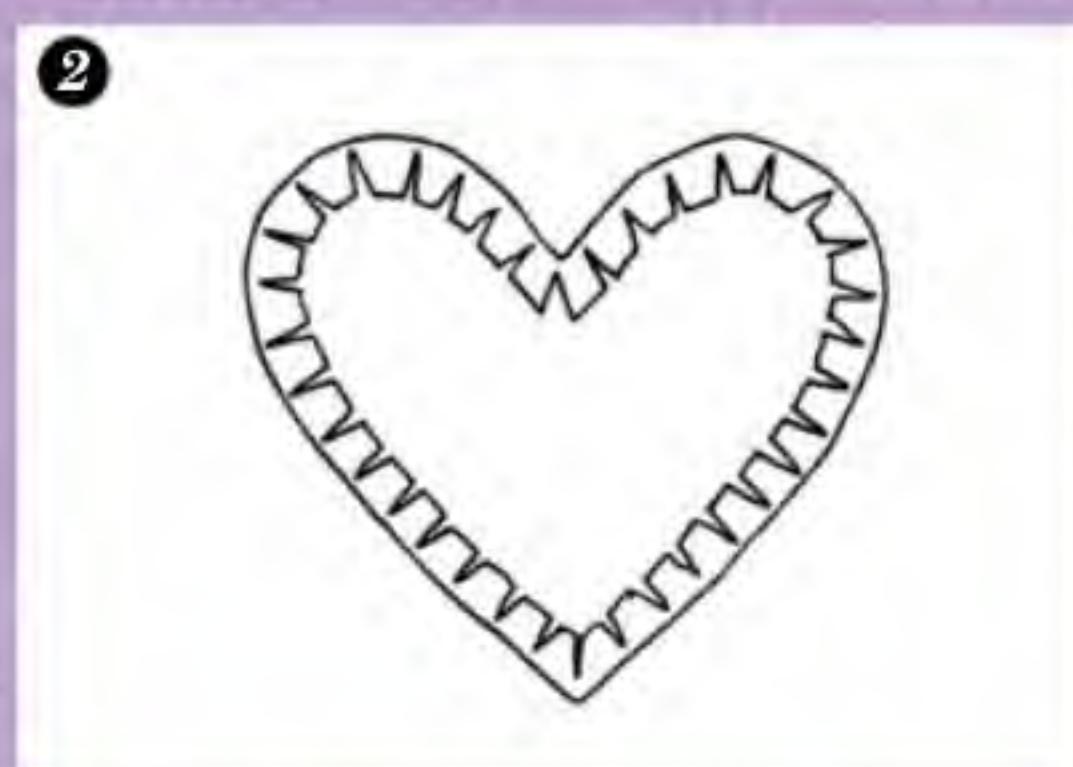


6 GET STITCHING

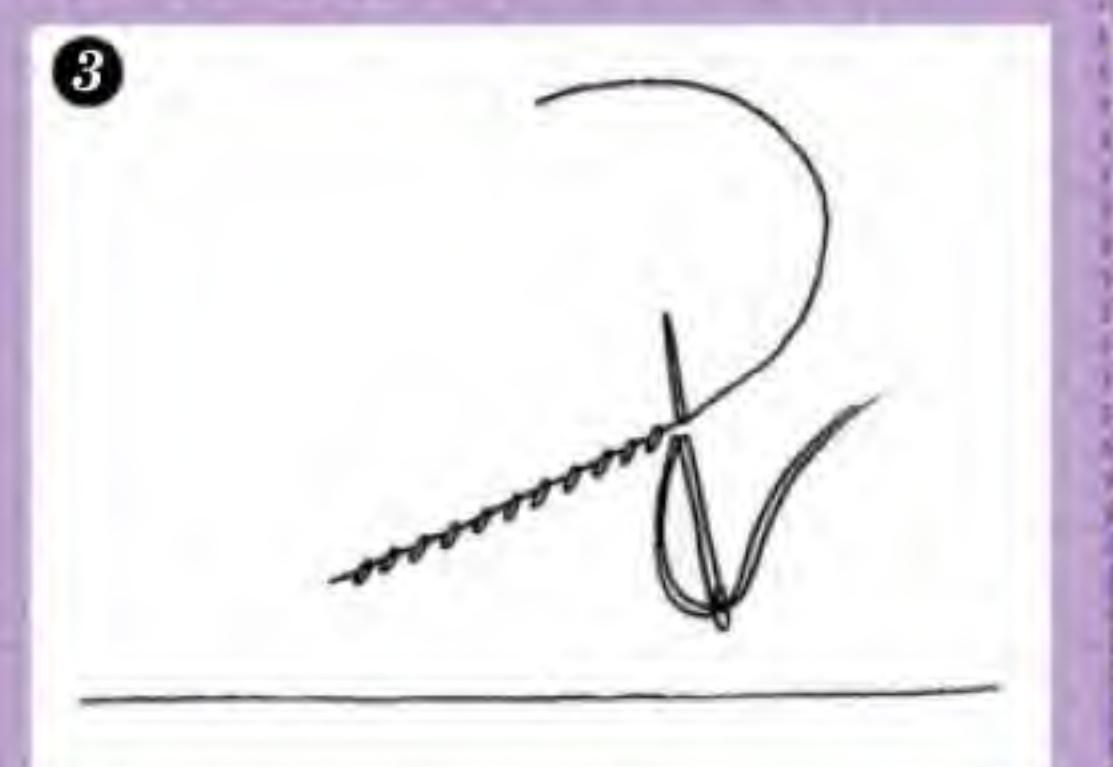
You can now stitch your appliquéd shape into place for a more permanent fix – work a blanket stitch all round the edge, or work small straight stitches, which cross from the base fabric to the appliquéd shape, or experiment with other stitches.



7 Finally, remove the backing paper, which you need to do by pulling it through the fabric. You can do this in one of two ways:
 • Leave one edge of the appliquéd shape unstitched, undo the tacking



stitches and pull out the paper. Then turn the edge back under and finish stitching it to your base fabric.
 • For a more intricate shape, make a small snip in the base fabric behind the centre of the appliquéd shape



and remove the paper through this hole. Obviously this will only work if you are then going to put a backing fabric over the back of your base fabric to hide the cut. This works well for complicated appliquéd quilts.



Lollipop flowers picture

By Helen Philipp

Bring a splash of the garden indoors with a pretty flowerpot picture to brighten the walls of a nursery, kitchen or bathroom

Bright fabrics and simple appliqué techniques make this sweet picture a pleasure to create. It's a perfect opportunity to use up scraps of your favourite quilt fabrics, or left-overs from other projects, as you only need tiny pieces for the flowers and bunting.

The simplicity of the lollipop-shaped flowers, combined with the blanket stitching, lends a childlike innocence to the pretty picture. Use bold colours and patterns to stand out against a plain background fabric, then add some small decorative buttons and a little embroidery and you'll have a special handmade piece to give as a gift or treasure in your own home – perfect!



YOU WILL NEED

- Backing fabric: 36x28cm (14½x11in)
- Assorted scraps of printed and plain fabrics
- Fusible web
- Stranded cotton in assorted colours
- Assorted decorative buttons
- Thin card
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

36x28cm (14½x11in)

Seam allowance

N/A

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Pretty Patchwork Gifts
by Helen Philipp

Patchwork isn't just about large projects like quilts. Here is a collection of more than 25 cute little patchwork projects, each one making a perfect present... even if that means a gift for yourself or your home! Ideal for using up scraps, this book shows you how to make cushions, decorations, toys, bags, and even jewellery, with small amounts of fabric and haberdashery. Published by David and Charles, PB, £14.99

www.stitchcraftcreate.co.uk





SEWING THE PICTURE

Top tip

Make a mini quilt with wadding and backing fabric, bind with bias binding, then hang with a ribbon

1

To make templates, trace or photocopy the flower and flowerpot shapes, adhere to thin card and cut out carefully. Apply fusible web to the back of your chosen fabric for the bottom border, the flowerpots and the flowers – see page 95 to find out how to do this.

2

Cut out a rectangle 2x14.5cm (3/4x5 3/4in) from your chosen fabric for the bottom border. Peel off the backing and place onto the white fabric. When you are happy with its position, iron in place. Stitch a few small, random straight stitches around the edges using one strand of stranded cotton.

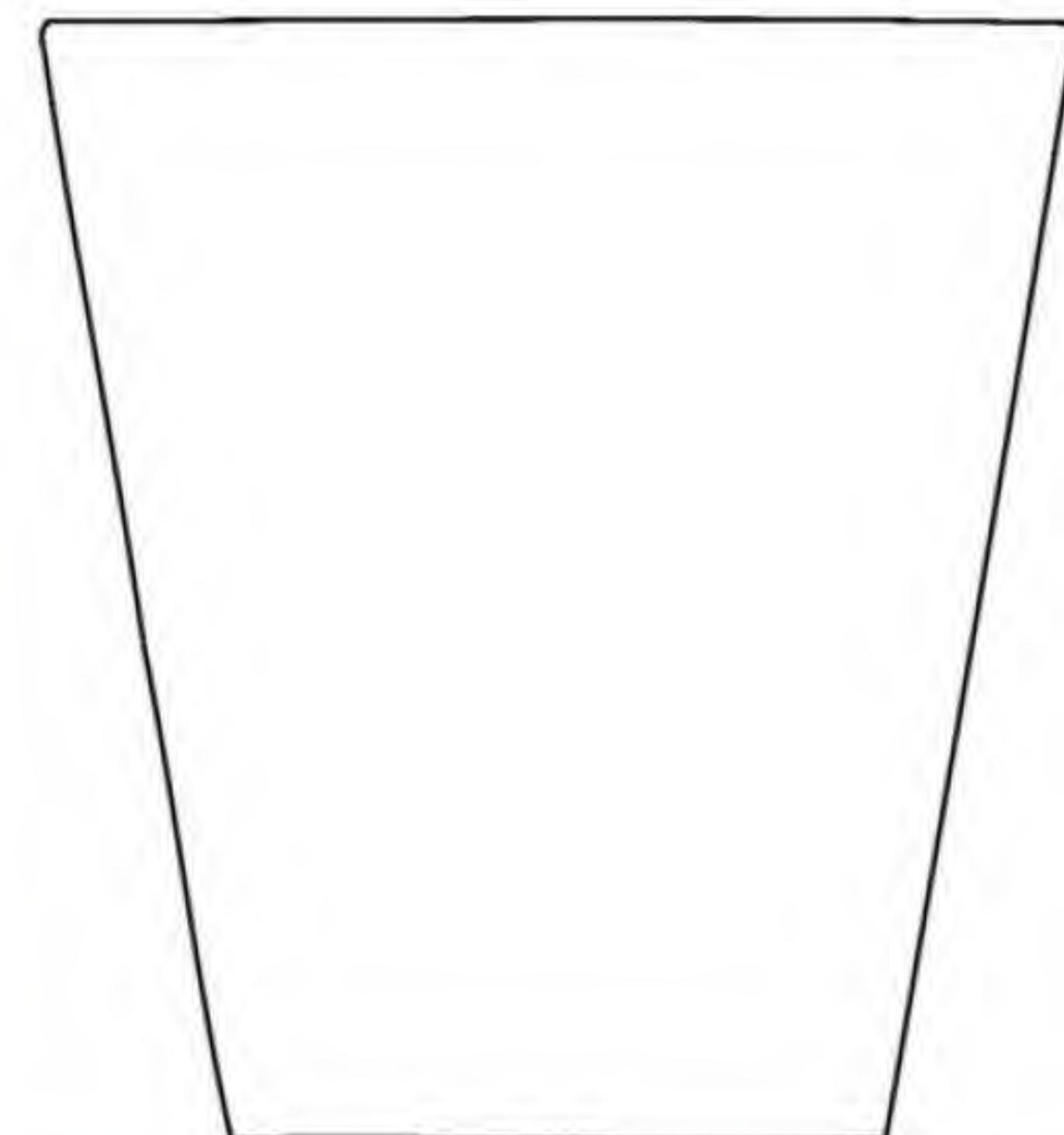
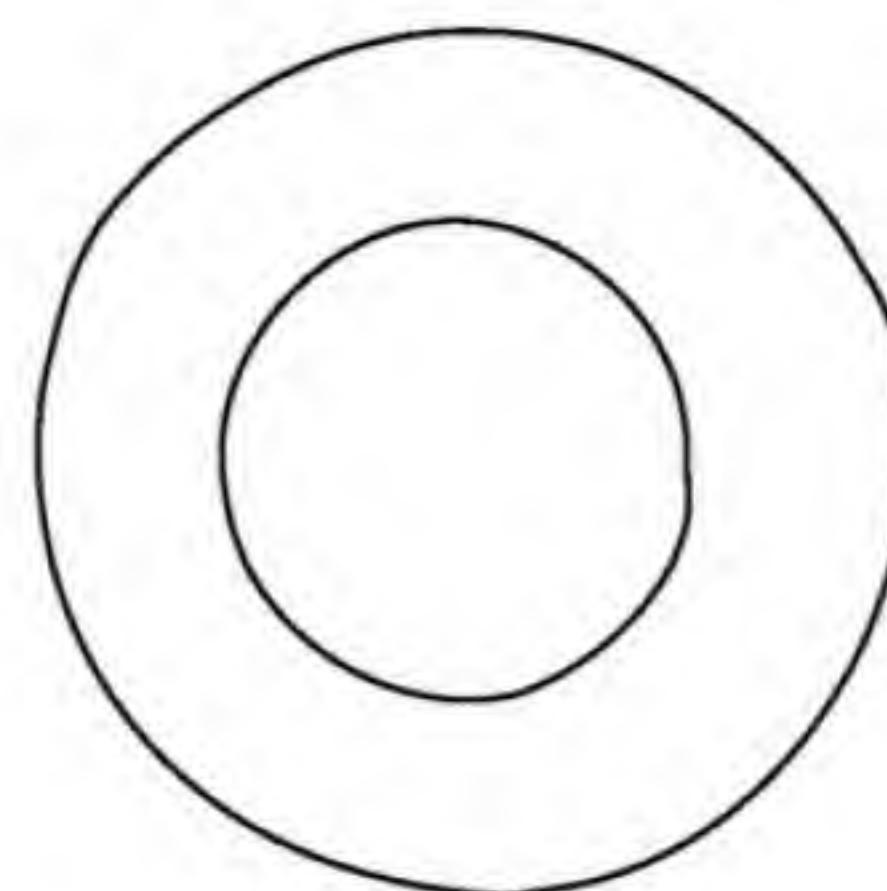
3

Use the templates to cut out three flowerpots from your fabrics. Position them just above the bottom border, remove the paper backing and iron them in place, then blanket stitch around each one using one strand of stranded cotton.



TEMPLATES

Trace or photocopy these templates at 100% to make patterns



4

Use the templates to cut out six coloured fabric circles for the flowers and six smaller white fabric circles for the centres. Arrange and iron them in place, then blanket stitch around the outside of each flower using one strand of stranded cotton. Sew a line of running stitch in stranded cotton around the flower centres.

5

Cut out three leaf shapes from fabric, iron in place and blanket stitch around each leaf. Using one strand of stranded cotton, make a long stitch and couch it down to form stems from the base of the flowers to the top of the pots.

6

Apply fusible web onto the back of scraps of fabric and cut out eight tiny triangles for the bunting. Sew a line across the top of the triangles using one length of stranded cotton and couch down. This is done by laying the length of thread across the fabric and holding it in place with tiny, evenly-spaced perpendicular stitches.

7

Sew your assorted buttons above the flowers. Finally, press the work carefully, sew some decorative buttons on to the flowerpots and frame the picture.

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Funky monkey pillow

By Susan Cousineau

The bold design motifs featured in this cheeky, cheerful cushion are created using simple, tried and tested appliqué techniques

Brighen up a nursery or child's bedroom with this gorgeous smiling monkey cushion. We've made ours in pinky colours but it's just as easy to use a different colour palette for children who don't like pink!

It's put together in layers by making the appliqué motif first, then stitching that onto one of the squares of fabric that goes into making the cushion. Building it in stages means it can be tackled in manageable chunks, making light work of a finished project that looks impressively complex.

YOU WILL NEED



- Two pieces of fabric for cushion: 36cm (14in) square
- One piece of fabric for motif backing: 25cm (10in) square
- Scraps of felt for ears and face: pink, cream, brown, tan
- Pillow foam: 36cm (14in) square, or polyester fibrefill
- Regular or lightweight paper-backed fusible web
- Stranded cotton in assorted colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

36cm (14in) square

Seam allowance

6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Sweet Nursery Chic
by Susan Cousineau

Ideas and instructions for making everything you'll need for a nursery - blankets, quilts, pillows, wall hangings and accessories - is here. It's easy to make a coordinating ensemble as projects are grouped into themes, and you're bound to find the perfect one to suit any baby. For beginners to embroidery, an illustrated stitch guide tells you all you need to know.

Published by David and Charles, PB, £15.99
www.stitchcraftcreate.co.uk



CUTTING OUT THE SHAPES

Getting your finished design looking as good as possible depends on how well you cut out your pieces. Follow these simple steps to make your funky monkey face perfect.



1

Trace the pattern shape onto the paper side of a sheet of fusible web.



2

Cut out the pieces, leaving around 6mm (1/4in) around the shapes.

HOW TO MAKE THE CHEEKY MONKEY



1

Cut out the different shaped pieces of the monkey from scraps of felt. Now back your shapes with fusible web, following our step-by-step guide (above).

2

Embroider your cheeky monkey's facial features, using our cushion photo as your guide. Use backstitch for his mouth and French knots for his eyes.

3

Blanket stitch around the edges of the monkey to attach him to your 25cm (10in) square of backing fabric. Use our photo as a guide to position him.

4

Attach the monkey panel on to the right side of one of your 36cm (14in) cotton squares. Pin or tack the panel in place, then blanket stitch around the edges.

MAKING THE CUSHION

1

Pin the two 36cm (14in) pillow pieces of fabric, right sides together. Sew around the edges of the pillow using a 6mm (1/4in) seam allowance. As you go, you need to leave an opening at the bottom that's large enough to insert the pillow foam (or to stuff with fiberfill).

2

Clip the seam allowance at the corners, turn the pillow right side out and press for a neat finish.



3

Insert the pillow foam, or stuff with polyester fiberfill. To finish, simply slip stitch the opening closed.

TIP If you're using a pillow insert, you can also add small pieces of fiberfill to plump up and add firmness to the sides and corners. Pillow inserts can vary in thickness among manufacturers, so remember that fiberfill is always an option if you are uncertain about the fit of any pillow insert.



3

Following manufacturer's instructions, iron the fusible web pieces, paper side up, onto the wrong side of the fabric.



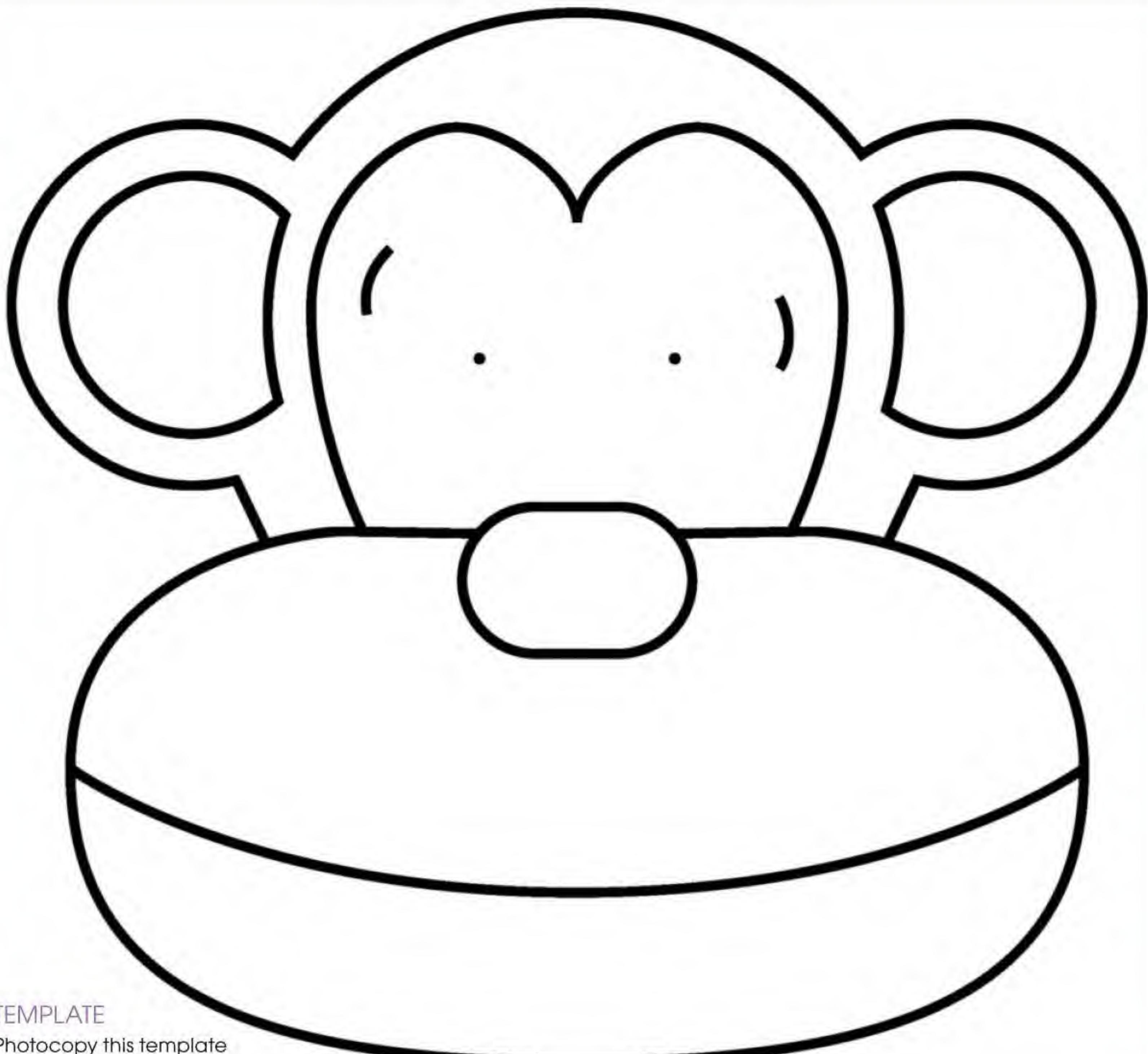
4

Once fabric has cooled, cut out the pieces along the traced lines.



5

Remove the paper backing, then fuse your shapes into place following the manufacturer's instructions.



TEMPLATE

Photocopy this template
at 125% to make a pattern



All about... HAND EMBROIDERY

Projects are transformed by the addition of decorative stitchwork... you can create pictures, write messages and trim edges with patterned borders



TRACING DESIGNS

Most embroidery projects use templates, which you'll first need to transfer onto your fabric in order to stitch the design.

1 Before you start tracing, press your fabric to make sure it's completely flat. Plan where you want to place the design and leave yourself enough space. Check the project instructions for whether you need to enlarge the template on a photocopier – you can enlarge or reduce any design to suit your specific project.



Trace your picture directly onto your fabric using a washable or fading fabric pen, available at most craft and sewing shops.

2 The simplest way to transfer a design onto fabric is to trace it. Place the fabric right side up over the template. Secure with masking tape so it can't slip. Trace over all the lines using a pencil. If you struggle to see the design through the fabric, trace the design onto tracing paper using a fine black pen. Then tape the design and fabric to a window or a light box, and trace the design. To help with this, you could turn your fabric upside down and stretch it into a hoop or frame



Place dressmaker's carbon paper face down onto your fabric. Place your picture on top and trace using a blunt pencil.

with the right side in the back of the hoop and the wrong side flush against the design surface. Then, remove the fabric from the frame and reinsert it right side up, ready to embroider.

3 If your fabric is too thick to do this or it's impossible to trace through the window, trace the design onto tracing paper and pin to your fabric. Following your pencil lines, tack around the design

using small stitches in a contrasting coloured thread. Score along your tacking stitches with the tip of a needle and then remove the paper by tearing.

4 Alternatively, try dressmakers' carbon paper. Trace the design onto plain paper. Place the carbon paper over your fabric, where you want to place the design, with the dark side next to the fabric surface. Place your paper template

STARTING STITCHING

WASTE KNOT

This is the simplest way to get started with your embroidery.



1 Knot one end of your thread and take it down through the front of your fabric, about 2.5cm (1in) from your starting point. Bring it back up to make your first stitch.



2 Begin stitching your design. Stitch over your starting thread, then, once your starting thread is secure, simply snip off the knot.



3 To secure the thread when you've finished stitching, weave it through the back of your stitches.



on top and trace over the outline using a blunt pencil or similar. Remove the carbon paper and you will have created a dark outline for your embroidery design.

5 Once you've drawn your design onto the fabric, place it into a hoop or frame. This will provide the correct tension, your stitches will be neater and it will prevent the fabric from puckering.

SEALING FABRIC EDGES

Use these simple methods to stop your fabric from fraying and the thread getting caught in your stitching as you work.

1 MASKING TAPE

For a quick fix, seal edges with masking tape. It may leave a residue, so leave extra fabric around your design, which you can cut off when you're finished.

2 BLANKET STITCH

If you've got more time, use a blanket stitch to stop your fabric fraying. This can also be used for a decorative finish.

3 ZIGZAG STITCH

For the most secure finish, use a sewing machine to stitch a zigzag right up to the edges. It's the best choice for linen.

HOOPS AND FRAMES

Although not absolutely essential, you will get a much better finished result if you mount your fabric in an embroidery hoop or frame before you begin stitching.



WOODEN HOOP

A wooden hoop is the most economical option, with various sizes available and most costing just a few pounds. You can also buy metal and plastic spring-tension hoops which work in the same way.



SEAT FRAME

This sort of frame is an ingenious embroidery tool. It consists of a wooden hoop, stand and base, which you sit on to steady it. It's the best option for anyone who prefers stitching with both hands.



PLASTIC CLIP FRAME

An interlocking clip frame is a great portable option – the hollow plastic tubes make the frame super-light. Simply place your stitching over the frame and use the plastic clips to secure in place.



INTERLOCKING BAR FRAME

With this sort of versatile frame you can create the perfect size every time by mixing and matching the wooden lengths. Stretch your fabric over the frame and secure using drawing pins.

STARTING STITCHING

This easy start to your embroidery is brilliantly neat.



1 When working with two strands, a loop knot is a neat method. Cut a length of thread and fold it in half to create a loop at one end.



2 Thread your needle with the two tail ends. Bring your needle up to the front of your fabric, leaving a small loop of thread on the reverse.



3 Make your first stitch and pass the needle through the loop on the reverse. Pull to secure the thread. Continue with your stitching as normal.



FINISHING YOUR WORK

Follow our simple finishing techniques to ensure a professional result for your embroidery projects.

WASHING

The washing stage can really bring your stitching to life and also restore the crispness to cotton or linen fabrics

1 Before you start, check that your fabric and threads are colourfast and if there are any specific washing instructions for them. Fill a tray with warm water and add a small amount of bleach-free detergent. Gently immerse your stitching in the water.

2 Leave to soak for about 15 minutes then gently agitate it in the tray. To remove frame marks, rub the fabric together at the edge, avoiding marking your stitches.

3 For stubborn stains, empty your water. Place your stitching face up on the tray and use a sponge and fresh warm water to sponge that area.

4 Rinse under warm water to remove the detergent. To remove excess water, roll your stitching in a clean, white towel. Place face down on a towel to dry.

PRESSING

You may need to eliminate wrinkles from your finished piece with an iron and if you have washed it then it's best to press your fabric while it's still slightly damp.

Pad your ironing board with a thick towel. Place your work right side down on top with a thin, clean cloth over it. Press carefully until the fabric is dry. The towel will stop the iron from flattening the stitches. Press gently, working the point of the iron into the stitches. Avoid having the iron too hot.

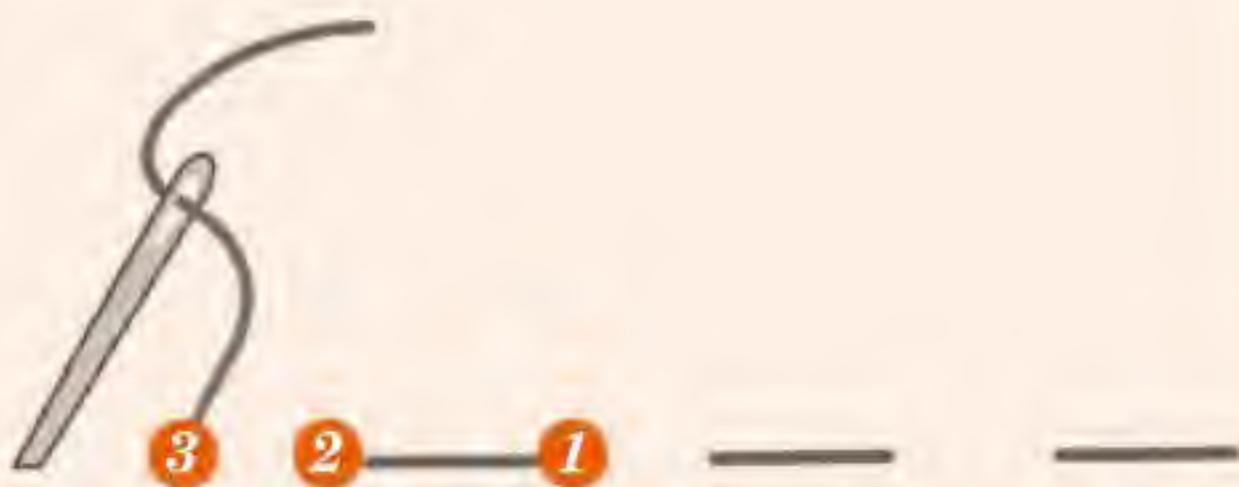


HOW TO DO... EMBROIDERY STITCHES

Follow our stitching guides to five of the most popular embroidery stitches to complete the projects on the following pages.

RUNNING STITCH

Running stitch can be used to outline, to pad before working another stitch on top of it, or even to strengthen the edge of a design for cutwork. The stitches should all be of the same length. Bring the needle up at 1, down at 2, up at 3 and so on. The spaces between the stitches are usually the same length as the stitches themselves but you can vary the length of the spaces for effect.



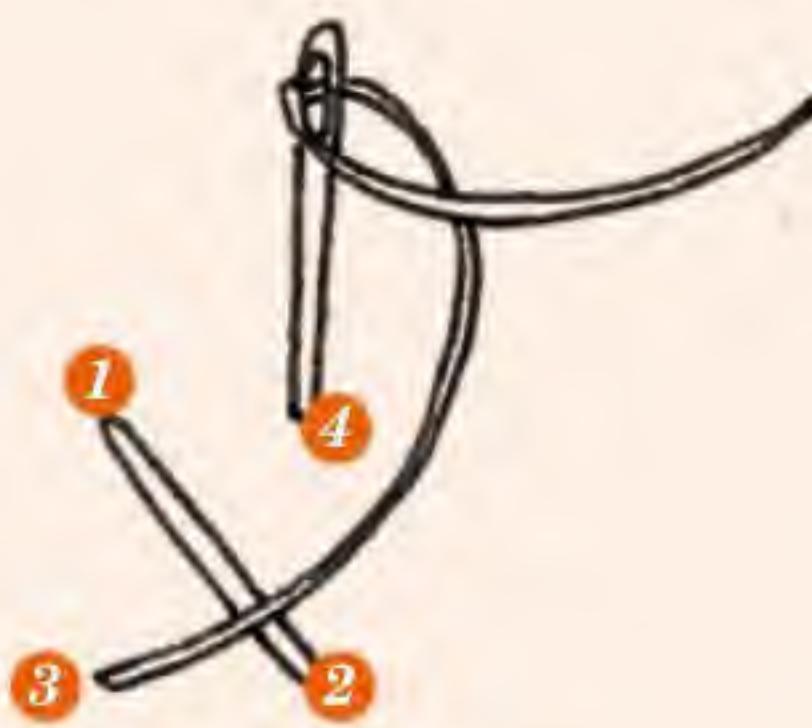
BACKSTITCH

Backstitch forms a neat line, which can be used on its own or to outline other stitches. It should be worked so that all the stitches are of the same length with no gaps between them. Bring the needle up at 1, down at 2, up at 3, down at 4 and so on. Continue stitching in this way, always working back on yourself.



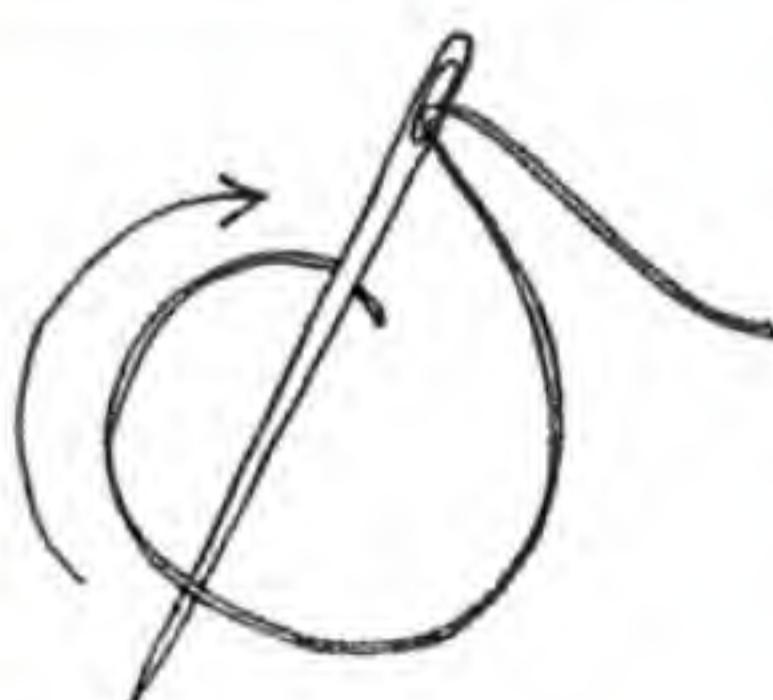
CROSS STITCH

One of the most common embroidery stitches, cross stitch can be worked in vertical or horizontal rows with all the stitch points touching. Each cross can be worked any size, depending on the effect you wish to achieve. It makes attractive borders or can be used to fill a shape, and is also useful as an isolated stitch worked at random over fabric. Bring the needle up at 1 and down at 2 to form a diagonal stitch. Bring the needle up again at 3, across the first stitch and down at 4. When working in rows, the top diagonal stitches should all lie in the same direction.



FRENCH KNOT

French knots are the most common type of embroidery knot. They can be used singly for small details or in closely worked groups for features such as flower centres. You can stitch these knots in just one colour or create a different look by combining two colours of thread in your needle. Holding the thread with your left hand, twist the needle around the thread twice (do not twist the thread around the needle). Insert the point of the needle back into the fabric and pull the thread to tighten the knot. Push the needle through the fabric close to where the thread emerged. To make a larger knot, increase the number of times you twist the needle.



SATIN STITCH

Satin stitch is a popular filling stitch as it covers the fabric well with a smooth, even surface. It is versatile enough to fit any size of area. Work with your fabric in an embroidery hoop to keep the tension of the stitches even. Bring the needle up at 1, down at 2 and up again at 3. Keep stitching in this under and over motion so that the back of the work looks the same as the front.





Hedgerow coffee cosy

by Alyssa Thomas

What better way to experience your favourite hot drink than with a uniquely decorated cup cosy wrapped around it?

Don't grab a disposable paper sleeve on your next coffee run... use this sweet reusable one instead!

Environmentally-friendly and adorable, what more could you want to sweeten your morning brew?

This coffee cosy is home to a tiny and sweet birdie, bunny and hedgehog. In case you miss the look of a typical coffee sleeve, you could use corduroy, which mimics the familiar corrugated paper, for the lining. Embellish your coffee cosy with a big button, and you'll be ready to keep your latte warm and your hands cool.

YOU WILL NEED

- Quilt-weight fabric for the front: at least 41x30cm (16x12in)
- Heavy-weight fabric for the lining: at least 36x13cm (14x5in)
- Stranded cotton in assorted colours
- Water-soluble marker (or other transfer materials such as iron-on transfer paper)
- Embroidery scissors
- Embroidery hoop
- 4cm (1½in) button
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

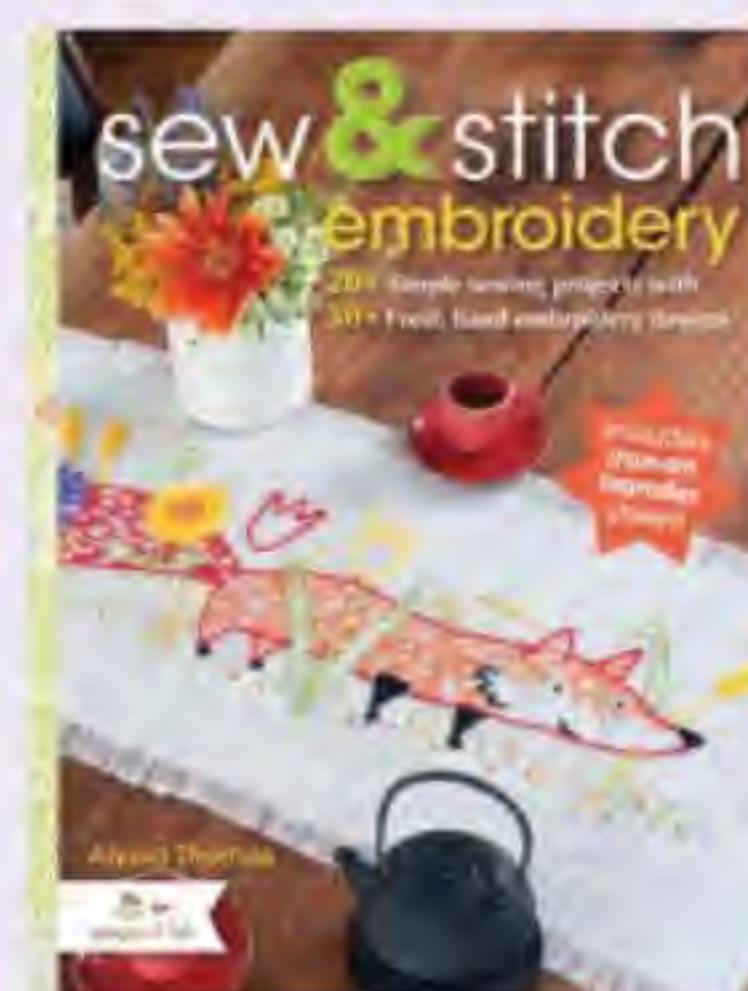
28x6cm (11x2½in)

Seam allowance

6mm (¼in) included

Glossary

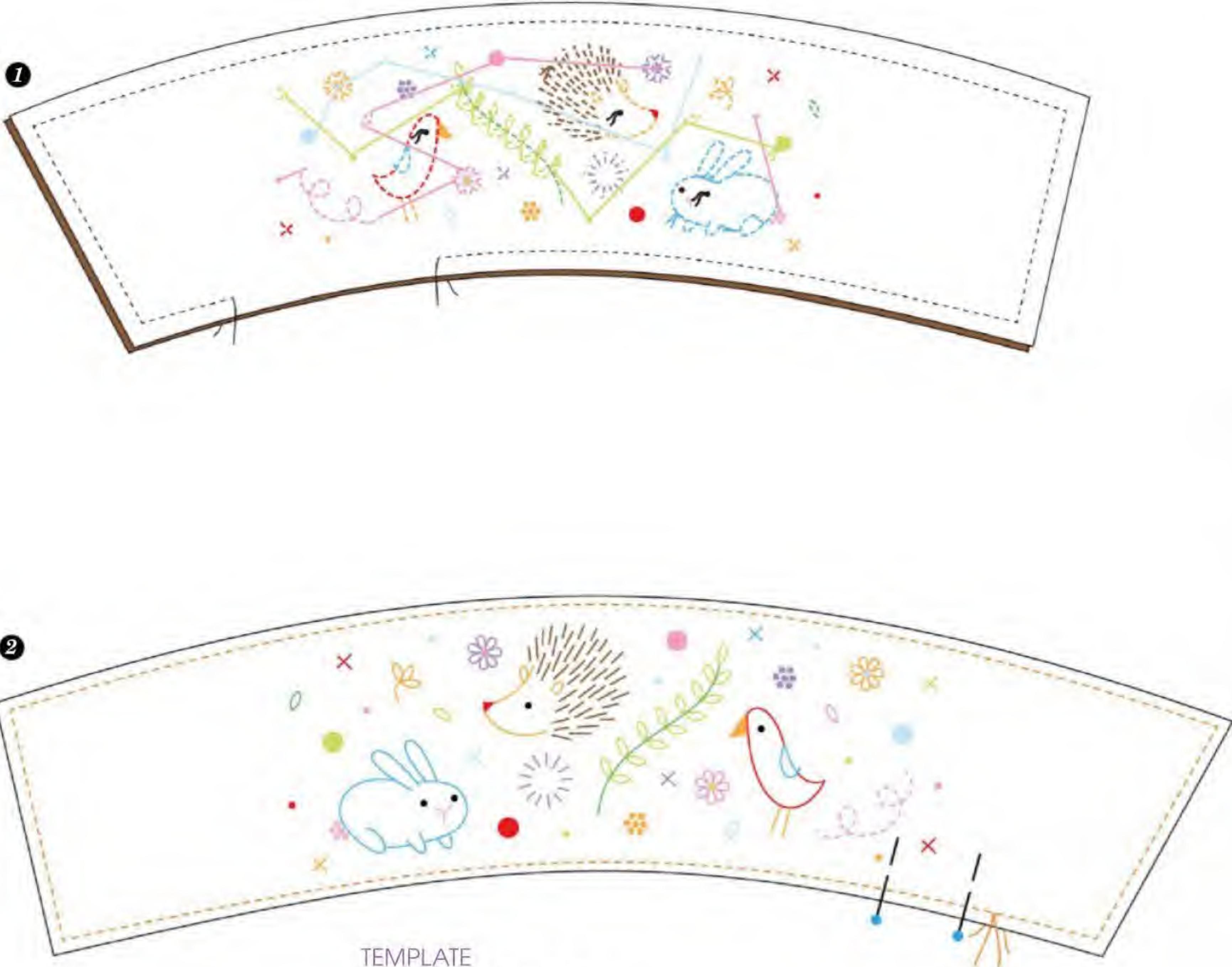
Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Sew and Stitch Embroidery
by Alyssa Thomas

This collection of 20 textile projects (some of which don't require any stitching) includes 30 hand embroidery designs. Create wall art and other gorgeous things to hang, dangle, display and otherwise decorate your home with. There are also pretty fashion accessories and cute playthings, too. One of our favourites is the child's grinning octopus bed linen... so cute!

Published by David and Charles, PB, £16.99
www.stitchcraftcreate.co.uk



TEMPLATE

Trace or photocopy this template at 150%, then trace around the outer curved line, to make a pattern

EMBROIDERING THE MOTIF

1 TRANSFER THE DESIGN

Transfer the Woodland Creatures pattern on p110 onto your front fabric. Make sure you centre it inside the cosy outlines.

2 EMBROIDER THE MOTIF

Place the front of the fabric in the embroidery hoop and, using stranded cotton in colours of your choice, embroider the motif, referring to the stitching guide overleaf.

ASSEMBLING THE COSY

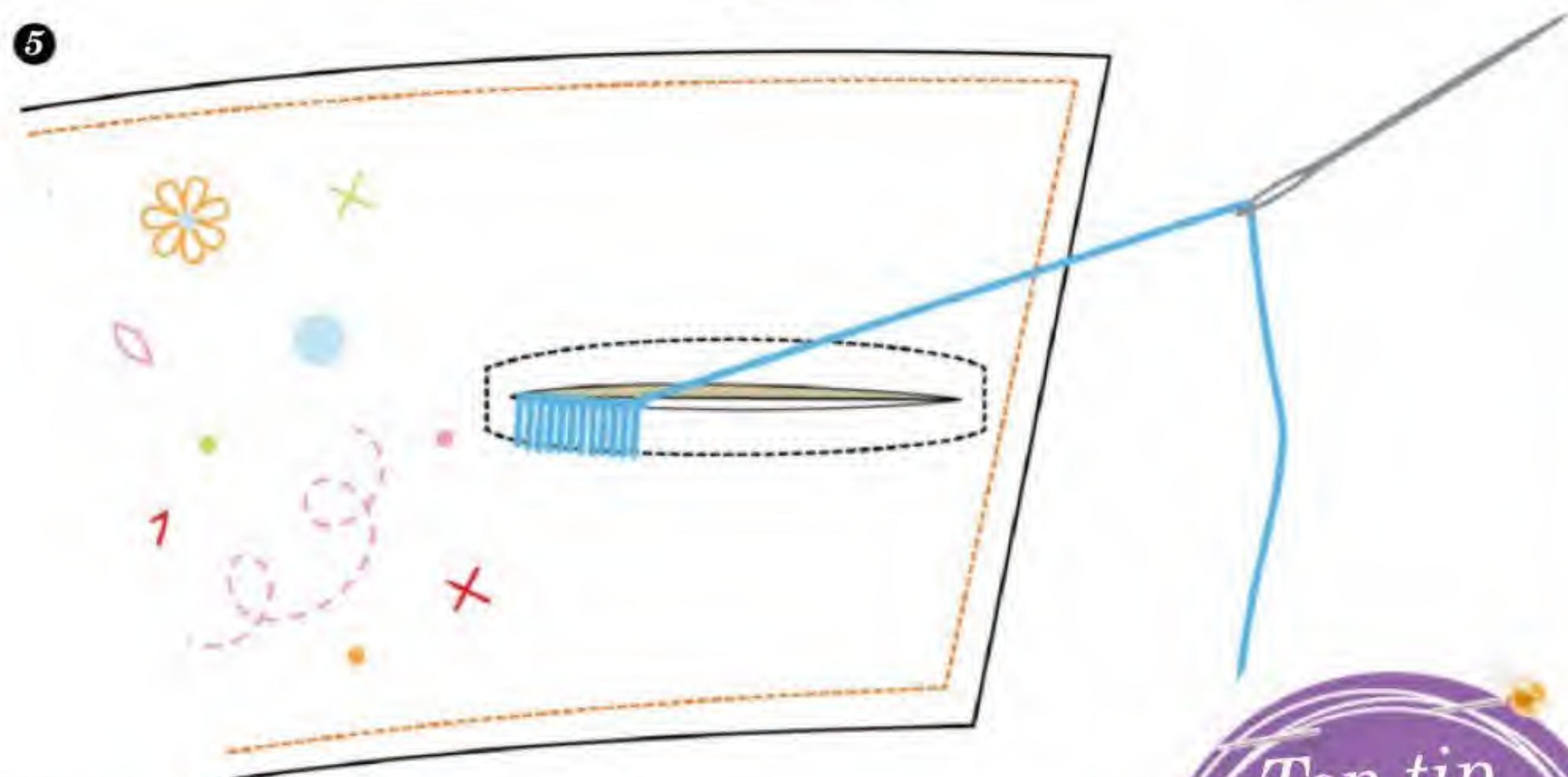
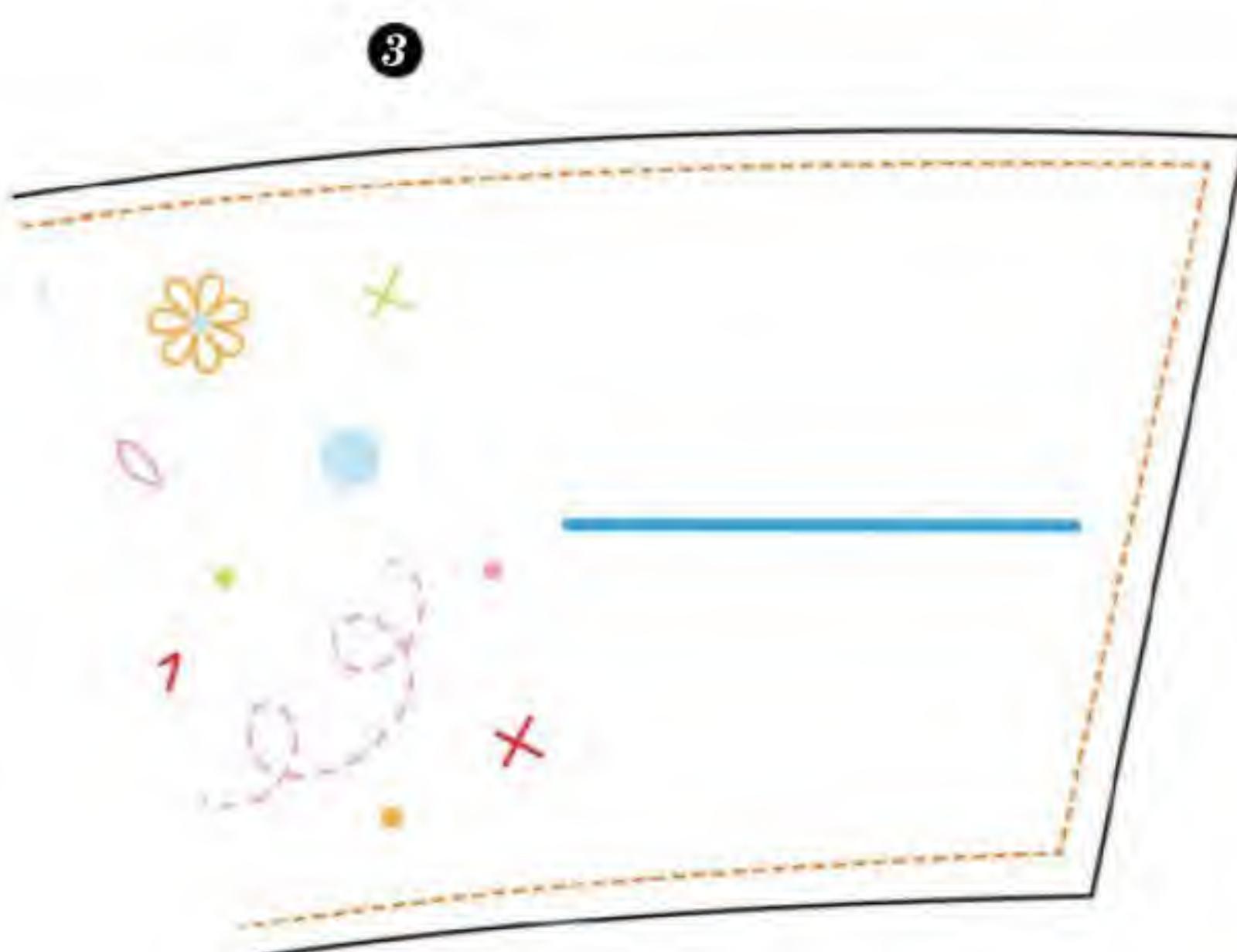
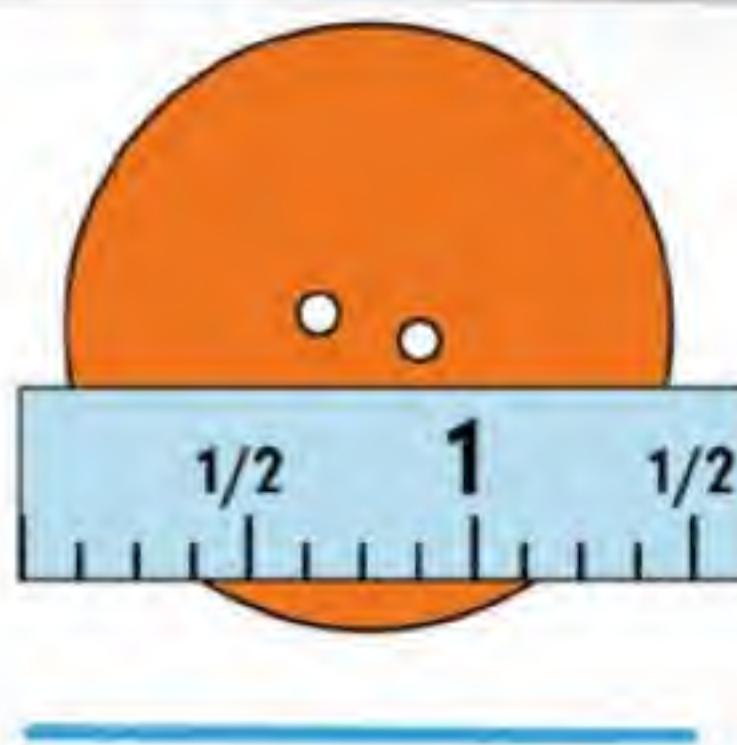
1

Place front and back fabrics wrong sides together. Then cut along the cosy template markings on the front fabric.

With right sides together, pin and machine sew around the entire edge, using a 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) seam allowance and leaving the marked gap open (fig. 1). Clip the corners. Cut notches in the outward curve and clip the inward curve. Turn the cosy right-side out through the opening.

2

Tuck in the raw edges of the opening 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) toward the inside and pin in place. Topstitch around the entire edge of the cosy 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in) from the edge, sewing shut the opening in the process (fig. 2).



STITCHING THE BUTTONHOLE

3

To determine the size of the buttonhole, measure the diameter of the button, then add the thickness. With a water-soluble pen, draw a horizontal line the length of that measurement on the front of the cosy about 2cm (3/4in) from the right edge, centered vertically (fig. 3).

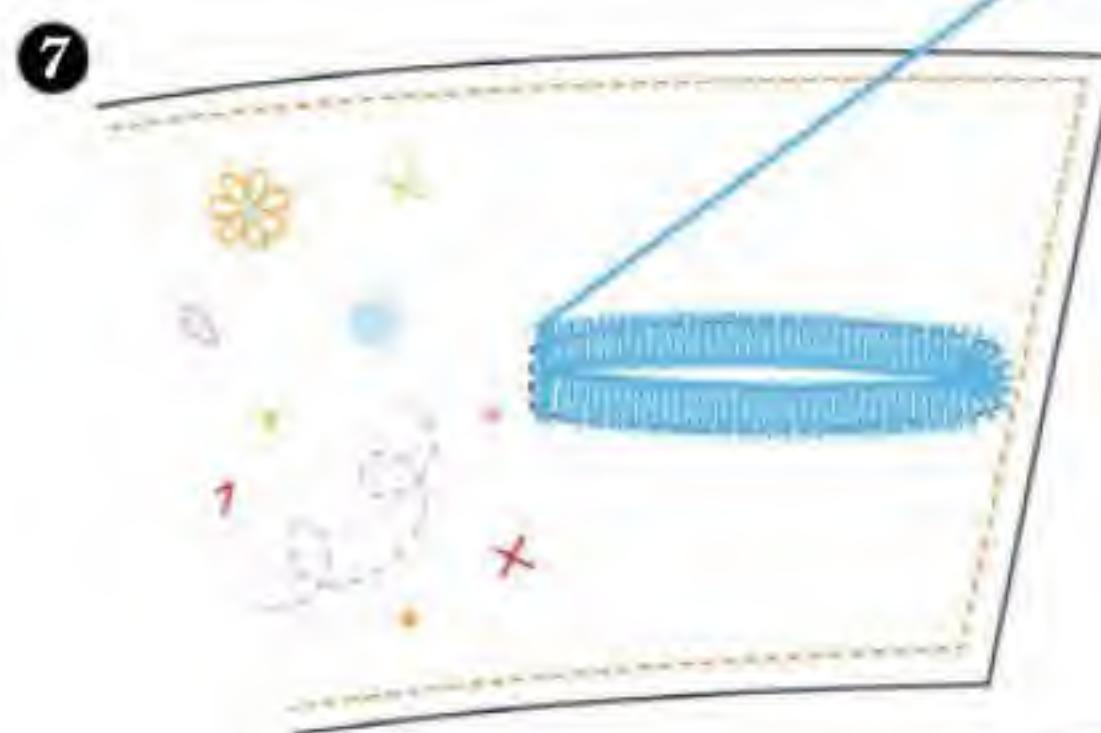
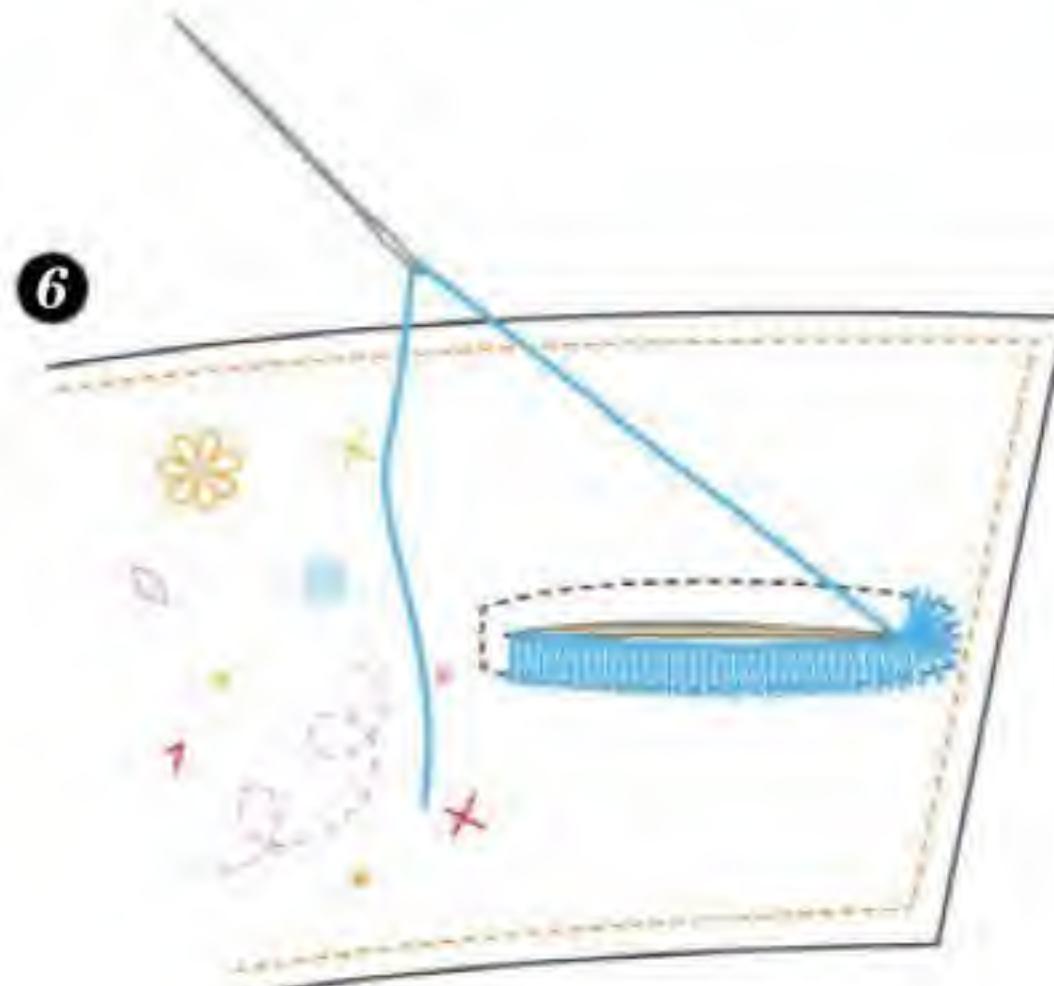
4

With the sewing machine, sew 3mm (1/8in) around each side of the line, making a rectangle. Then carefully slice open the centre of the buttonhole using a seam ripper (fig. 4).

5

Use the stranded cotton colour of your choice to stitch the buttonhole. Make one backstitch within the rectangle around your slash on the back fabric. This will hold the thread in place while you stitch. Starting on the left edge, bring the needle up through the slash between the front and back fabrics. Using a buttonhole stitch, stitch along the side of the slash (fig. 5).

Top tip
If you don't want buttonholes to be as visible as this cosy, use a thread colour that matches the fabric



STITCHING THE BUTTONHOLE CONTINUED...

6

When you reach the right end, fan out the buttonhole stitches around the end. Continue stitching around the second side (fig. 6).

7

When you get to end of the second side and back to where you started, finish the buttonhole with a bar tack (fig. 7). To make a bar tack, make a stitch across the entire height of the two sides at the left end of the slash. Blanket stitch around the long stitch and the layers of fabric. Tie off the end of the thread, and the buttonhole is complete.

8

Lay your button on the left-front of the coffee cosy, centred vertically, 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in) from the left edge. Using a water-soluble pen, mark the centre of the button on the cosy. Using the stranded cotton colour of your choice, stitch the button to the cosy (fig. 8).

EMBROIDERY PATTERN

Trace this pattern at 100% inside the cosy template on your fabric

KEY TO STITCHES

Lines: backstitch

Filled-in shapes: satin stitch

Dots: French knot

Dashed lines: running stitch

Xs: cross stitch

Turn to p106 for instructions on how to do these stitches





Dress-up pretty patches

By Susan Wasinger

These pretty cotton patches are quick and easy to stitch to your jeans. Perfect for mending holes... or make your own!

Mend your jeans and show your renegade craft style at the same time. A few charming scraps from your fabric stash and a couple of bold hand stitches make even the most bedraggled old dungarees spanking new again.

The patches are easy to make and stitch as this method shows you how to use iron-on denim patches to press some pretty cotton fabric on to then attach beneath the holes in your jeans. Rows of running stitch in matching stranded cotton are worked round the edges for extra strength and decoration.

If you are feeling ambitious, use the same cotton fabric to make a belt or to edge the top of your pockets for a perfect finish. Choose a range of fabric patterns and colours that you love or ones which match a favourite top for a coordinated look.

YOU WILL NEED

- Jeans to patch
- Scraps of fabric
- Iron-on denim patches
- Thread in assorted colours
- Stranded cotton in assorted colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

N/A

Seam allowance

6mm (1/4in)

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Sewn by Hand
by Susan Wasinger

Anything homemade has a unique character, and is special to a gift recipient because it's obvious how much love, effort and attention has gone into its making. In this book, you'll find more than 20 projects to hand stitch, each one a modern take on a traditional theme. Find pillows, aprons, pincushions, totes and lots of other pretty things for treasuring and gift-giving.

Published by Lark Books, PB, £16.99
www.thegmcgroup.com





PATCHING YOUR JEANS

1

Cut around the hole in your jeans to smooth the shape into a square, circle, or oval. Clip about 6mm (1/4in) into the corners of your square or at intervals around a circle (fig. 1).

2

Fold the edges of the hole 6mm (1/4in) under to the inside of the jeans and pin. Tack around the edges to hold these turnings firmly in place (fig. 2). Pressing these down at this stage will help with this as the denim is quite stiff.

3

Measure the hole and cut a piece of iron-on denim patch that is 2.5-5cm (1-2in) larger than the hole in width and length. Next cut a piece of cotton print that is about 2-3cm (3/4-1 1/4in) larger than the hole in both dimensions. Centre this cotton print on the adhesive side (wrong side) of the iron-on patch. Make sure there is at least 6mm (1/4in) border of iron-on adhesive exposed around the outside edge of the cotton piece. Put one pin in the centre to hold (fig. 3).



4



5



6

4

On your ironing surface, fit the patch in the hole of the jeans with the right side of the cotton up and the iron-on adhesive face up on the inside of the jeans. Make sure to position it in the hole so all the raw edges of the cotton fabric are covered by the finished edge of the jeans. Remove the pin and follow the manufacturer's directions to iron the patch into place (fig. 4). At this point, you will only be able to tack the patch in place as you will be ironing just on the front side. Remove the tacking.

5

Thread a large, sharp needle with stranded cotton. You can use all six strands in your needle for bold stitches or use less if you prefer a more subtle look. Try using different numbers of strands until you are happy with the look. Sew a line of running stitch around the patch about 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in) in from the edge of the hole (fig. 5). Add more rows of stitching if you wish. Follow our guide on page 106 for working this stitch.

6

Once the stitching is complete, turn the jeans inside out and finish ironing on the patch to secure it completely. The instructions given with the patch will explain exactly how to do this to make sure your patch is firmly attached.



Machine Sewing Techniques

Stitching with your sewing machine is easy once you know how. Learn how to use it to work machine embroidery, make bags, piece patchwork, stitch appliqué and create 3D shapes too.



All about... MACHINE EMBROIDERY

While hand embroidery can be wonderfully relaxing, using your sewing machine to embroider will allow you to become brilliantly creative!

Freehand machine embroidery means using your sewing machine in a 'freehand' style rather than working in straight lines, so you have more freedom to 'doodle' with your machine and work the stitches in any direction. The freehand style turns your sewing machine into an artistic tool you can use to create designs on fabric, often combining it with appliqué motifs.

To do machine embroidery you don't need much specialist equipment. Aside from fabric and spools of thread, you'll need to have a sewing machine that allows you to lower the feed dogs. The feed dogs are like metal teeth in the plate of the machine that hold onto your fabric and feed it past the needle. Lowering the feed dogs enables your fabric to move freely as you stitch.

You'll need to use an embroidery hoop to keep the fabric taut, and a darning or free-motion foot to attach to your sewing machine, to keep the fabric smooth.

GETTING STARTED

Purchase a darning foot, which can often be picked up for less than £10 at your local sewing shop. Consult your sewing machine manual for instructions on how to attach your darning foot, because all machines are different.

Mount your fabric into an embroidery hoop, but in the opposite way to normal, so the inner ring is facing up (fig. 1).

On your sewing machine, drop the feed dogs and thread the needle. Lift up the darning foot and place the hoop underneath. Hold the hoop firmly with both hands. Begin sewing, moving the hoop in any direction.

GAINING CONFIDENCE

Start by using a piece of scrap fabric to practise making squiggles and shapes (fig. 2). It takes a while to get the hang of it, so don't get discouraged. Once you feel a bit more confident, try stitching some shapes, starting with easy ones.

Top tip
Start with fabrics such as cotton and linen that won't slip, snag or pucker in the machine

PLAYING WITH STITCHES

Start off by doodling and playing with your sewing machine's different stitches. Have a go at straight stitches in different lengths and colours, then move on to zigzag stitches in various sizes and types. Then try making scribbles and loops.

MAKING SHAPES

Move on to making basic outlines for various shapes, such as circles, squares, hearts and flowers. Practise making double outlines by going around the shape again – your aim should be to get the shapes tidy but sketchy (fig. 3).





2



3



START SHADING

Once you're confident with making outlines, try colouring them in, which is called shading. Move the fabric backwards and forwards to fill the outline with stitches of thread, a bit like satin stitch in hand embroidery.

APPLIQUÉ MOTIFS

Add an extra dimension to your shapes with appliquéd. Cut out shaped pieces of fabric and attach with straight stitch or zigzag stitch outlines, or try stitching over both the appliquéd shape and the background fabric.

LAYERED APPLIQUÉ

Put together all the skills you've practised and you can create gorgeous designs like the pretty gift in the bottom-left photo – it's layered up with appliquéd motifs, outlining, shading and other interesting stitch styles.



DARNING FOOT

A darning foot differs from a normal presser foot because it allows you to stitch in whatever direction you like while still keeping your fabric smooth. Each brand varies so check the instructions for how to attach it. Once it's fitted, slide the fabric under the foot, drop the needle and you're ready to start. Most darning feet can be moved up and down, allowing room for a hoop underneath.





Embroidered flower napkin

By Laura Wilhelm

Bring a little flower power to picnics and lunches with a floral napkin that's so easy to make with a sewing machine

Transforming table linen from something functional into a thing of beauty is really easy – particularly if you fancy trying machine embroidery. You don't even have to make your own napkin – this design could be applied to napkins you already have, whether they're made from plain or patterned fabric – but of course if you do make them from scratch then you'll get exactly the fabric you want.

Once you've got the hang of the flower design here, experiment with different colours to get a range of results. And of course there's nothing to stop you sketching your own floral patterns and turning them into embroidered blooms.

As with all machine embroidery, it's a good idea to practise on a few scraps of material before sewing on your finished napkins.



YOU WILL NEED



- One piece of fabric for each napkin: 49cm (19 1/4in) square
- White thread for bottom bobbin
- Decorative strong cotton thread in 2 colours for top bobbin
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

45cm (17 3/4in) square

Seam allowance

2cm (3/4in) seam included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms

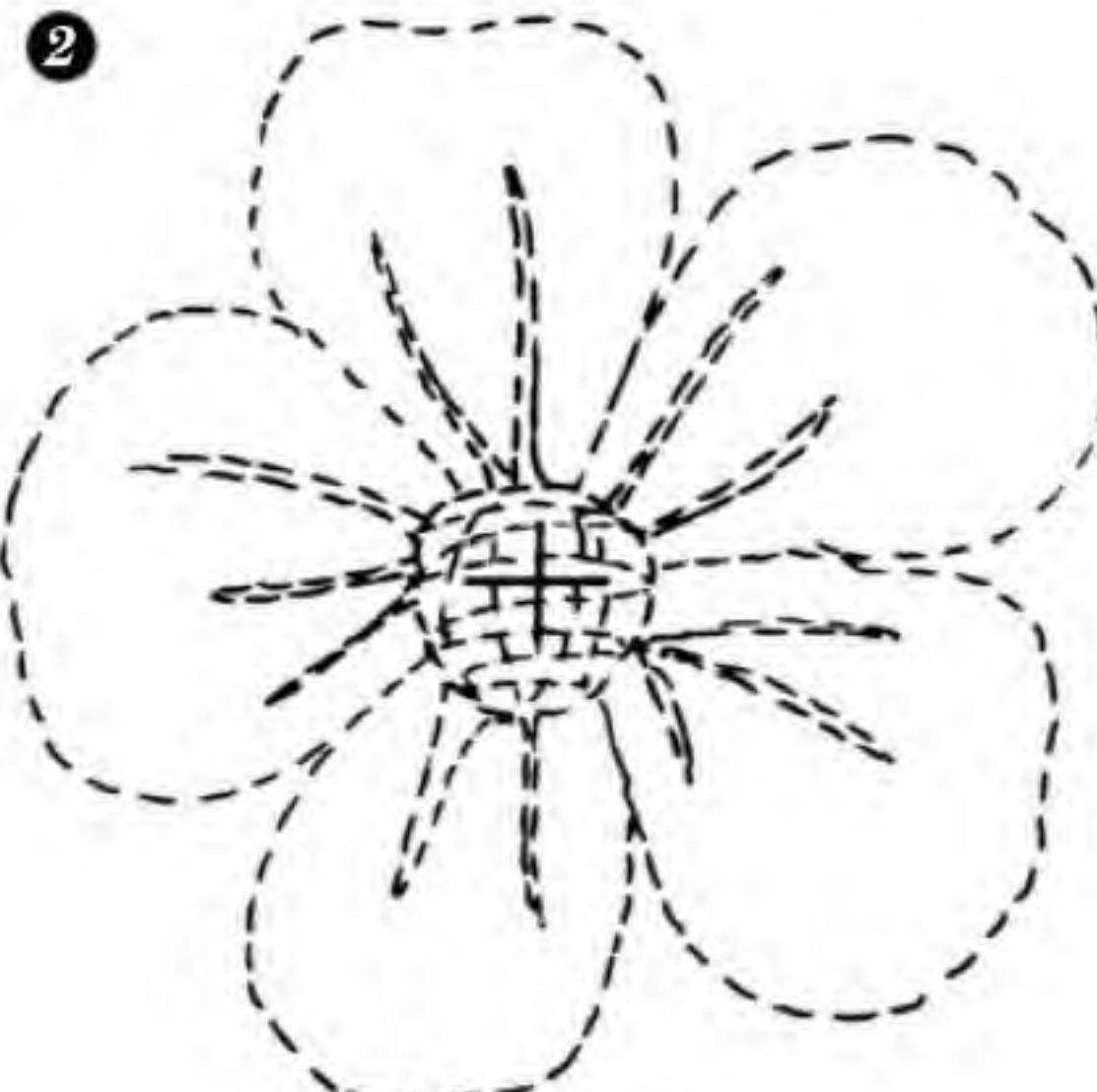
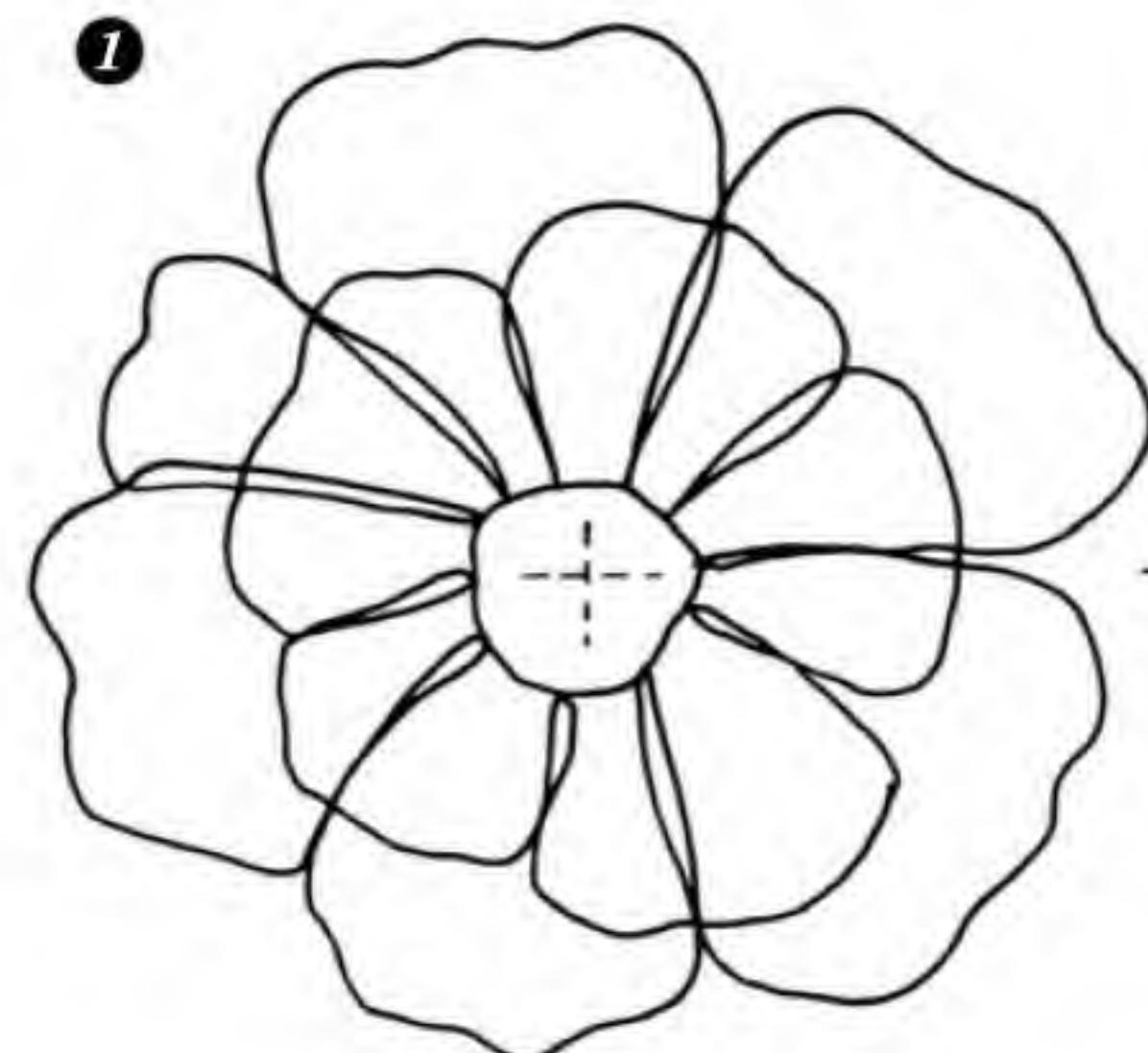


Stylish Sewing
by Laura Wilhelm

Here's a collection of 35 contemporary projects, from clothes and accessories to homewares and toys. With beautiful photography, and full-size patterns included, this book will really inspire you to get sewing. For needle-wielders who are feeling particularly creative, many of the designs lend themselves to customisation, letting you pick your own fabrics or make subtle adjustments.

Published by Search Press, PB, £12.99

www.searchpress.com



SEWING THE NAPKINS

1 MAKING HEMS

Turn under two opposite edges twice by 1cm (3/8in) each, then iron and tack these hems. Topstitch close to the edge.

2 FINISHING UP

Turn under the other two edges twice by 1cm (3/8in), iron and tack. Make sure the edges don't jut out at the sides, then sew in place near the edge.

EMBROIDERING THE MOTIF

1

Transfer the shape for the first colour of thread (fig. 1) to one corner of the napkin - position the centre of the flower 7cm (2 3/4in) away from both edges.

2

Insert a stronger sewing needle (90-100) and use the first colour of strong cotton thread for the top thread in the machine and white thread in the bottom bobbin. Check the stitch size on a remnant of fabric, stitch length approx 3.5mm (1/4in). If necessary, relax the top thread tension a little. Sew roughly over the shape of the flower twice with your first colour of thread.

3

Transfer the shape for the contrasting thread (fig. 2) onto the napkin. Change to the contrasting strong cotton thread in the sewing machine and sew over again, slightly offset, one to two times. You should end up with a frilled flower as shown in fig. 3.





Freehand teacup cushion

By Katy Berwick

Create quirky soft furnishings by drawing with your sewing machine! This teacup cushion is sure to get people talking...

Free machine embroidery is the technique of using your sewing machine to 'draw' on fabric. Rather than sewing in the rigid straight lines you might be used to, in free machine sewing you move the fabric around under the needle to create images of surprising intricacy.

Kate Smith, author of *Makery*, says, "I love how it takes away all the rules. You can just go where your needle takes you – even if you're using a template. If you've not tried it before, be warned that once you get the hang of it, free machine embroidery is addictive!"

This cool teacup design, taken from Kate's book, is the brainchild of The Makery tutor Katy Berwick. You can see more of Katy's work at www.droppthedog.etsy.com.

YOU WILL NEED

- One piece of fabric for the front: 43cm (17in) square
- Two pieces of fabric for the back: 43cm (17in) square
- Thread in assorted colours
- 15cm (6in) embroidery hoop
- Cushion pad 40cm (16in) square
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

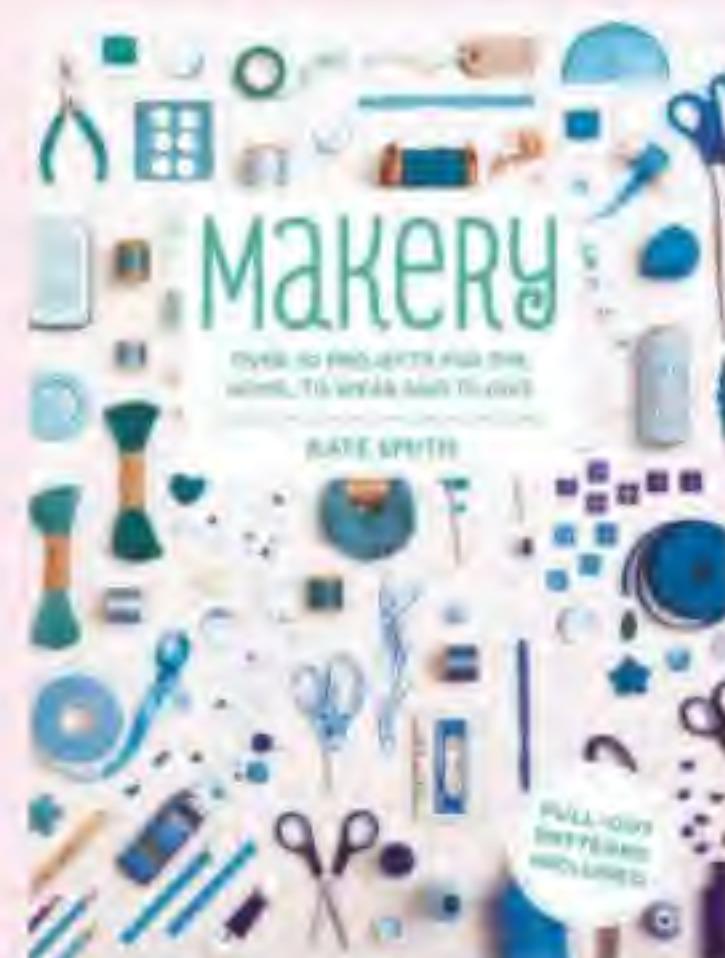
40cm (16in) square

Seam allowance

1.5m (1/2in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Makery
by Kate Smith

Covering all sorts of crafts, from jewellery making to sewing, *Makery* is a beautifully presented collection of projects. Inspired by the classes held at The Makery venue in Bath, each project is lavishly photographed and has detailed instructions to ensure that even complete beginners can create gorgeous gifts, accessories and homewares.

Published by Octopus, PB, £14.99

www.octopusbooks.co.uk





SETTING UP YOUR SEWING MACHINE AND TEMPLATE

1

Start by setting up your sewing machine. Following your machine's manual, lower the feed dog (the teeth that are below the presser foot that draw the fabric through the machine). This will allow you to move the needle freely, as if you were drawing freehand with the needle.

2

Again, following your machine's manual, attach the darning foot. This will prevent the fabric from puckering and allows for more stability.

3

Set your machine to straight stitch and ensure the needle is positioned centrally. Don't worry about the stitch length; you will determine that by manually drawing the fabric through the machine. Thread your machine with the contrasting thread that you want to use for the teacup design.

4

Iron your fabric. Now trace the teacup outline onto your front piece of cushion fabric with the fine marker pen or chalk. Make sure the teacup is central and square on the fabric. Or you could trace directly onto the back of the paper template using tailor's chalk, then lay the template chalk down on your fabric and trace the teacup with a pencil to transfer the chalk design to your fabric.

Top tip
Experiment with free
machine embroidery
on scraps of fabric
before you embark
on this project

EMBROIDERING THE TEACUP DESIGN

1 FIX THE HOOP

Attach the embroidery hoop to a central position of the teacup design. You need to attach the hoop in the opposite way to usual, so place the inner (smaller) hoop on top of the fabric and the outer (larger) hoop underneath. Secure and tighten the hoop. Pull the fabric through the hoop so that it's drum-tight (fig. 1).

2 HOOP ON THE MACHINE

Raise the darning foot, and place the stretched fabric on the hoop underneath, ensuring the inner hoop is uppermost.

3 FIND YOUR THREADS

Lower the darning foot. Manually lower and raise the needle into the fabric at your chosen start point using the fly-wheel – this should bring a loop of the lower (bobbin) thread up to the surface of the fabric. Carefully pull on the loop, so that you have two loose threads on the surface of the fabric – the top and bottom threads.

4 START SEWING

You're ready to sew! Turn the machine on and gently lower the pedal – make slow stitches at first. Rather than allowing the machine to pull the fabric through, you need to guide the fabric using the hoop, so that the needle follows the lines of the teacup. Try to keep the stitches even in length by moving the fabric/hoop at an even pace, but don't worry too much about following the template lines exactly – wiggly lines give the finished product an extra uniqueness and charm.

5 RETRACE YOUR STEPS

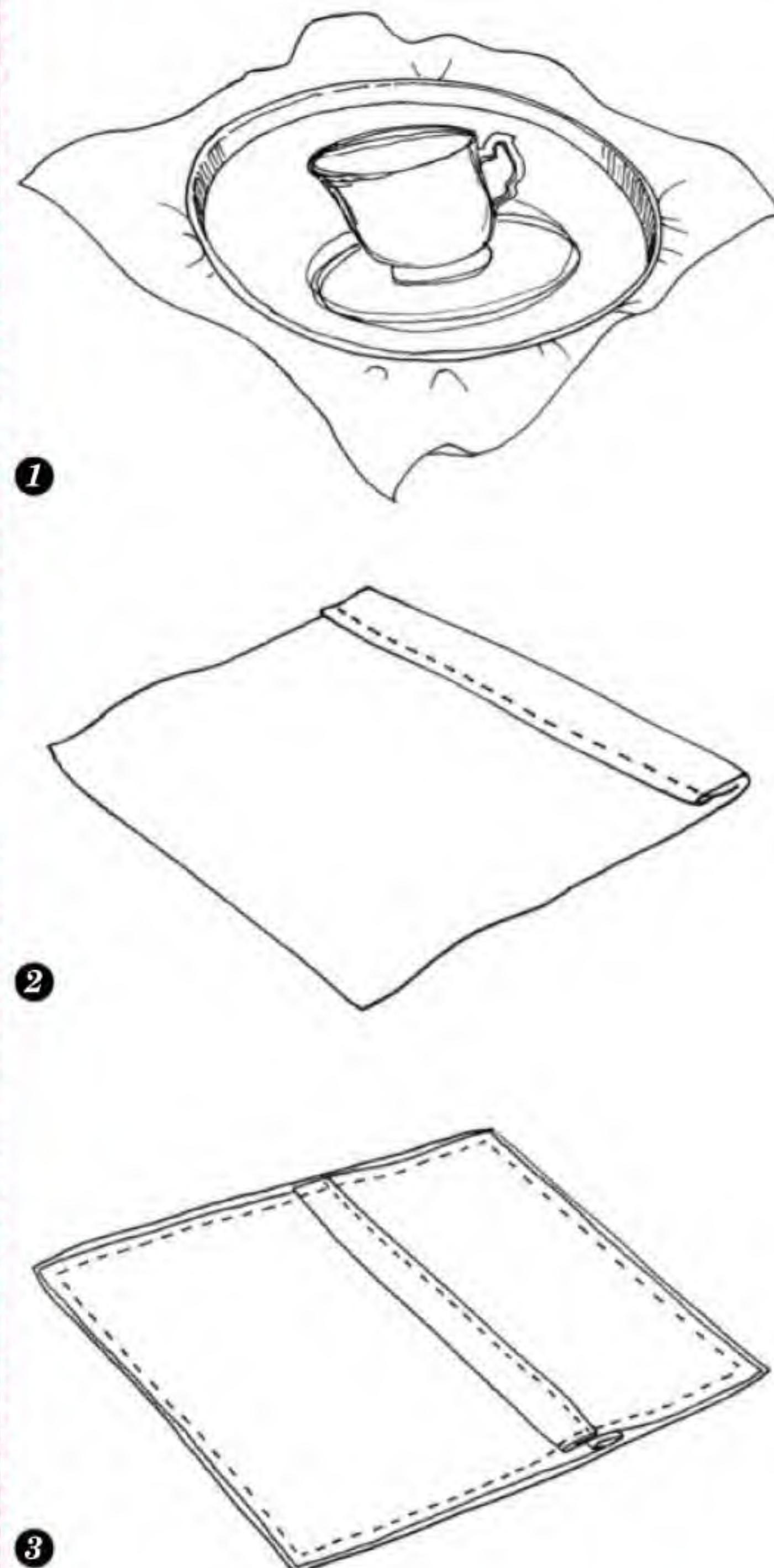
For the effect shown in the photograph, sew several lines of stitching over each other, tracing over the lines a few times. You don't need to secure your stitching at the start or end – just ensure it overlaps.

6 MOVE THE HOOP

When you're close to the edge of the hoop, remove the fabric and reposition the hoop. You may need to do this several times until you've completed the whole design.

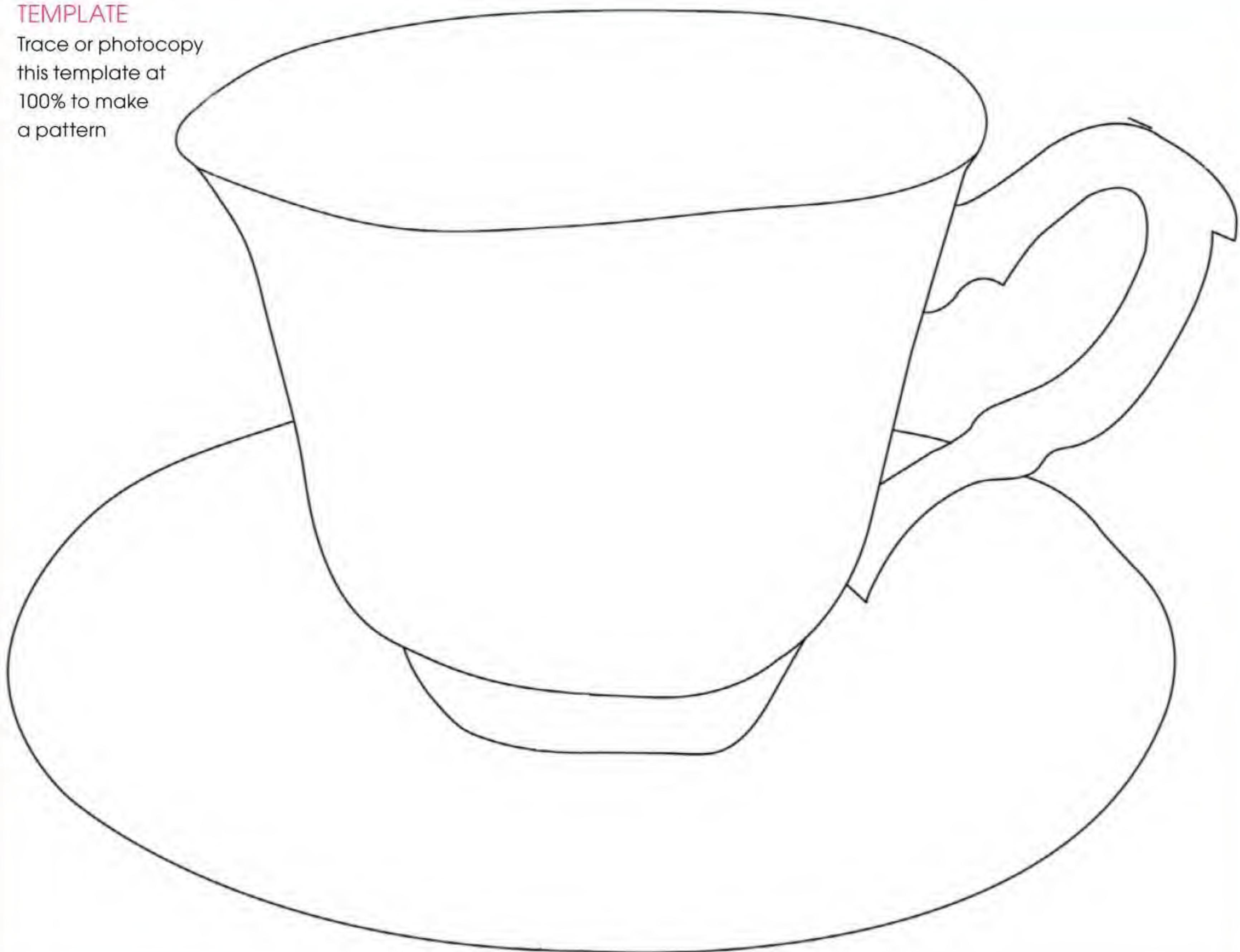
7 PRESS AND FINISH

Once you've finished stitching, remove the fabric from the hoop and press it with a moderate iron.



**TEMPLATE**

Trace or photocopy this template at 100% to make a pattern



MAKING THE CUSHION COVER

1

Set your machine back to standard sewing – replace the darning foot with a regular presser foot, change the thread to a co-ordinating colour, raise the feed dogs and set the stitch length to medium.

2

Take the two smaller pieces of fabric. Fold over a 2.5cm (1in) hem down one of the 43cm (17in) sides on each piece, folding towards the back, press, then fold over by another 2.5cm (1in). Pin and press, then stitch together close to the folded-over edge (fig. 2).

3

Place the embroidered fabric in front of you, right side up. Lay one smaller fabric piece on top, right side facing down. The raw edges should line up along the top, bottom and left-hand sides, and the neat hemmed edge should sit vertically, just right of centre. Pin it in place.

4

Take the second smaller fabric piece and lie it on top with the right side facing down. The raw edges should line up along the top, bottom and right-hand sides this time, with the hemmed edge lying vertically left of centre. Pin it in place.

5

Stitch all the way around the four edges of the cushion, using a 1.5cm (½in) seam allowance (fig. 3).

6

Carefully trim the corners, ensuring you don't cut too close to your stitching. Turn the cushion cover right side out. Insert the cushion pad to complete your teacup cushion.

All about... BAG MAKING

You, your family and your home can never have too many bags, and learning how to make them must surely count as an essential sewing skill

Making bags is one of the most useful projects you can make with your new-found sewing skills as there are so many different types and variations to make. From a larger simple drawstring bag for a child's PE kit or a more miniature one to store dried lavender to a more complicated clutch bag – the choices are endless. The Toy Sack on p76 is ideal for fun storage and the Lunch Bag on p132 is a perfect way to carry your lunch to work on a stylish way. Here are some ideas and instructions to start your bag-making hobby.

DRAWSTRING BAGS

Drawstring bags are the simplest bags to make and the best place to start. They are ideal for storing things because the top can be pulled up tight to keep the contents safely inside.

THE BASIC DRAWSTRING

A plain drawstring bag is made from two pieces of fabric sewn together down the side and along the bottom. The top is then turned over twice and stitched down to make a casing through which the drawstring is threaded.

Decide how big you want your finished bag to be, then simply add a seam allowance to this and cut your fabric pieces to this size, remembering to add extra for the casing at the top.



1



MAKING A GATHERED TOP

This makes a plain drawstring bag look more special and much prettier.

- 1 Make a basic drawstring bag but allow extra fabric at the top – for example, if you want a 5cm (2in) gather across the top then you need to add 11cm (5½in) at the top (fig. 1).
- 2 Fold over the top 1.5cm (½in) then 5cm (2½in) then stitch this down



2

close to the edge and stitch another line all the way round 1.5cm (½in) above this to make the casing (fig. 2).

- 3 When you pull up the drawstring you will have a gathered top. To alter the height of your gather add more or less fabric to the top of the bag.

MAKING A HANDLED BAG

Bags with handles are really useful – not only can you vary the size and shape of the bag to suit your needs but also you can make the handles different lengths and widths, depending on use.

Short handles are ideal for small gift bags when you only need to hold the bag, or storage bags where the bag will be hung on a hook or knob.

Medium handles are good for small handbags or book-bag styles where you just need to hold the handles.

Long handles are perfect for shopping bags where you want to be able to put the bag over your shoulder. Their length can be adjusted depending on how far you want the bag to hang down your body.

MEASURING UP AND CUTTING OUT

- 1 Decide on the width and height of your finished bag then add a 1.5cm (½in) seam allowance to the sides and bottom and 2.5cm (1in) at the top edge. Cut two pieces to these measurements.

- 2 Now decide on the length of your handles. Pinning a tape measure to the top of one of the bag pieces often helps as you adjust this to see exactly what length works. You will need to cut two strips of fabric to this length but add 4cm (1½in) to each end (1.5cm (½in) for turning and 2.5cm (1in) to overlap on the inside of the bag when attaching it).

- 3 Decide what width you want your handle to be. Small gift bags will only need handles that are around 1.5cm (½in) wide but large shopping bags may need up to 5-7.5cm (2-3in). The width you need to cut is twice the finished width of the handle plus 1.5cm (½in) either side for a seam allowance.

Top tip
If you're making a bag that will carry heavy items, you can reinforce the seams – see page 28 to find out how



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

MAKING THE BAG

- 1 Stitch the two bag pieces, right sides together, down one side, across the bottom and up the other side.
- 2 Now turn the top over 1.5cm (1/2in) then 1.5cm (1/2in) again to the wrong side and stitch into place (fig. 3).

MAKING HANDLES

- 1 Fold handles in half lengthways right sides together and stitch down using a 1.5cm (1/2in) seam allowance – this will create a tube.
- 2 Turn the tube right sides out and press, making sure the seam runs down the centre back of the handle (fig. 4).
- 3 Turn the two short ends under 1.5cm (1/2in) to the inside of the tube then stitch each end of the handle to the inside of the bag. It's best to pin them in place

first to make sure you are happy with their positioning – make sure you put the end of each handle the same distance from the side seams as each other, so the bag hangs straight (fig. 5).

ROUND BOTTOMED BAGS

You can put round bottoms on drawstring or handled bags. They look really effective and are practical as they hold more things and can sit flat on a surface. You can make the bottom circular or oval. To calculate the circumference for measuring your side panels, measure round the circle or oval.

- 1 First work out how big you want the diameter of the bottom of the bag to be then cut this out, adding 6mm (1/4in) all round to the circle.

- 2 Multiply the diameter by 3.142 and this will give you the circumference of the bag body. Add your seam allowance, plus a little extra for easing to this and cut it the height you require (remembering to add on extra for a casing or a gathered casing) (fig. 6).

3 Even though you have calculated the circumference of the bag and added a seam allowance, the circle doesn't always fit exactly due to fabric movement and stretch. So, pin the main bag body right sides together to the circle then pin exactly where the seam on the bag body need to go (fig. 7).

- 4 Take out a few pins and stitch the body seam. Stitch the circle to the bottom of the bag (fig. 8).

- 5 Stitch your casing or handles at the top to complete (fig. 9).

LINING YOUR BAG

Bags look so much better when lined as they have more body and structure which means they stand better and they also look more finished inside. Choose a fabric that complements the outer or is much bolder to make a dramatic statement!

- 1 Make the bag lining in exactly the same way as the bag outer but leave a small gap in one of the side seams for turning later.

- 2 Put the outer inside the lining right sides together, matching all seams.

- 3 Stitch together round the top edge then turn it right sides out. Sew up the small gap in the lining then push the lining inside the bag.

- 4 If adding handles, pin them in place, matching raw edges, before sewing the outer and lining together, stitching through all layers.





Sporty duffle bag

By Cheryl Owen

This versatile bag is easy to make, simple to customise and so handy you'll wonder how you managed without it!

Keep your belongings safe and your hands free with this easy-to-make duffle bag. It's kept closed with a drawstring in a channel at the top, which is threaded back through the bottom of the bag to form the straps.

Contrasting fabric triangles are decorative but also reinforce the corners of the bag so you can fix metal eyelets to thread the drawstring through. Choose a hardwearing fabric to make sure your bag will withstand plenty of use!



YOU WILL NEED

- Fabric for main part: 50x112cm (20x44in)
- Fabric for contrast triangles: 20x112cm (8x44in)
- Iron-on medium interfacing: 20x112cm (8x44in)
- Fabric for lining: 40x112cm (16x44in)
- Two 11mm (3/8in) gilt eyelets and fixing tool and hammer
- Sticky tape
- Cord: 3.4m (3 3/4yds) x 6mm (1/4in)
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

39.5cm (15 1/2in) tall x 35cm (13 3/4in) wide

Seam allowance

1cm (3/8in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



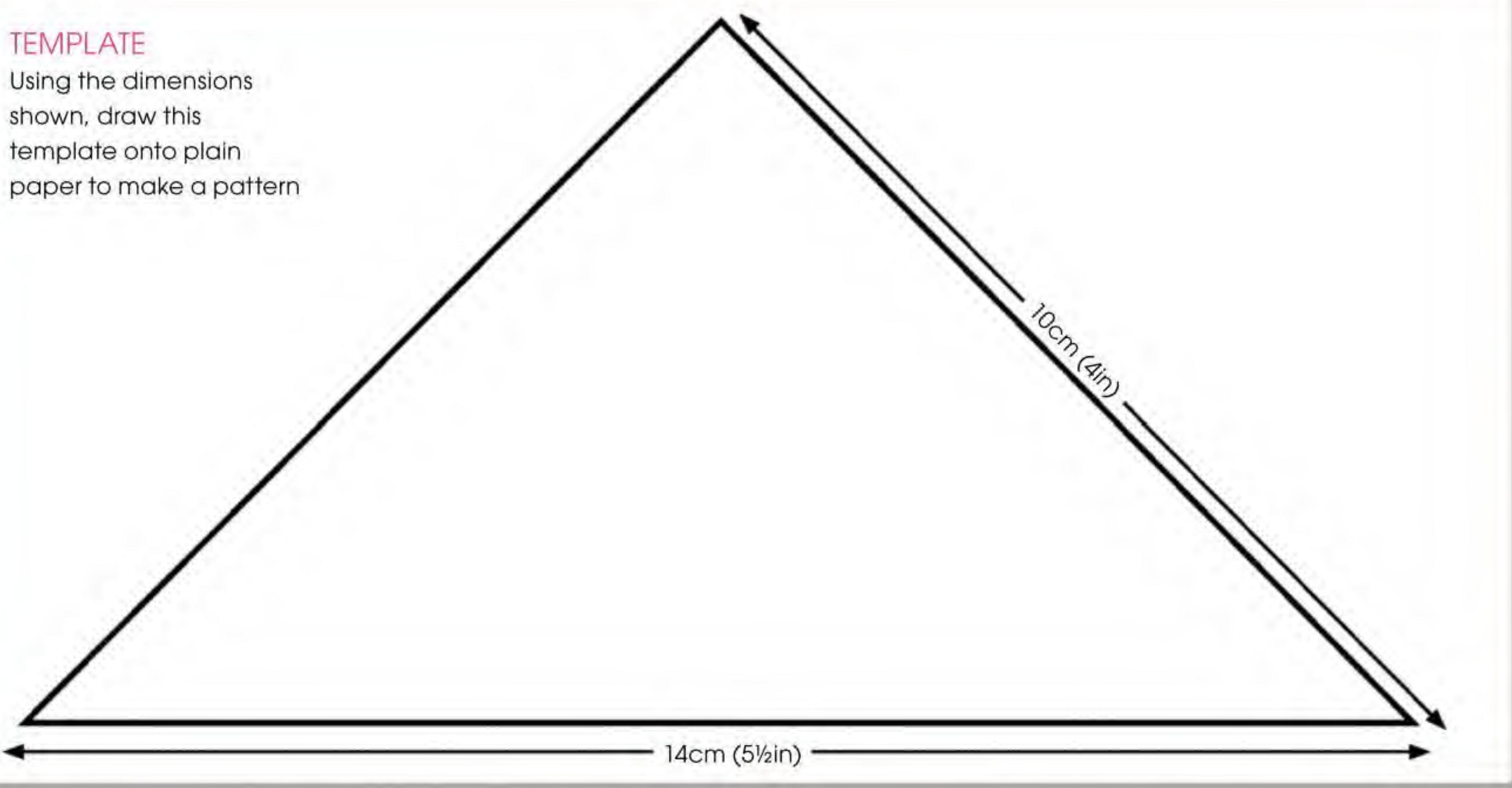
The Book of Bags
by Cheryl Owen

Make sure you're never without the perfect accessory - *The Book of Bags* contains 30 stunning projects that cover all sorts of bags, from duffle bags to handbags, beach bags, purses and more. With detailed instructions, templates and photos, Cheryl Owen's designs are easy to follow and simple to make, even for complete beginners.

Published by New Holland, PB, £14.99
www.newhollandpublishers.com

**TEMPLATE**

Using the dimensions shown, draw this template onto plain paper to make a pattern



1



2

Top tip
Appliquéd initials
will quickly turn
this project into the
perfect PE bag for
school kids

MAKING THE TRIANGLES

1

Using the template, cut four triangles from your triangle fabric and the iron-on medium interfacing. Press the interfacing to the wrong side of the triangles. Press under 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) on the longest edge of each triangle (fig. 1).

2

Cut two 46x37cm (18x14 1/2in) rectangles from the main fabric. The 46cm side is the length of the bag and the 37cm side is the width. With right sides facing up, tack a triangle to the bottom corners of both pieces of fabric, matching the raw edges. Stitch close to the pressed edges (fig. 2).



MAKING THE BAG

3

Place the two bag fabric piece right sides together and stitch down one side, along the bottom and up the other side, but starting and finishing 2cm (¾in) from the top edge. Clip the corners and press the seams open. Press under 1cm (½in) on the upper edge of the bag and stitch in place to hem the bag (fig. 3).

4

Cut two 38.5x37cm (15x14½in) rectangles of lining fabric. With right sides facing, stitch the long side edges and the short lower edge of the linings together, starting and finishing 1.5cm (½in) below the short upper edge. Clip the corners and press the seams open. Turn the lining right side out.

Slip the bag inside the lining with wrong sides facing, matching the seams and lining up the bottom edges – the lining will come below the top edge of the main bag. Pin and tack the raw edge of the lining to the bag (fig. 4).

5

Turn the bag right side out. Press under 4.5cm (1¾in) on the upper edge of the bag and pin in place. To make the channel for the drawstring, stitch around the bag 1.5cm (½in) below the upper edge then 3.5cm (1¼in) below the upper edge again (fig. 5).



6

Top tip
Metal eyelets and
punches can be
bought online or
in good sewing
shops

FINISHING THE BAG

1

Make sure the lining fits neatly into the lower corners of the bag. Lie the bag down smooth and flat. Fix an eyelet in the centre of the triangles through all the layers, following the manufacturer's instructions.

2

Bind sticky tape around the centre and ends of the cord. Cut the cord in half (through the taped section). Use a bodkin to thread one cord through the channel, entering and emerging through the same gap. Insert one end of the cord through the eyelet on the same edge of the bag. Overlap the ends of the cord by 2.5cm (1in). Hand sew the cord ends securely together (fig. 6). Repeat with the other cord through the opposite gap and eyelet.

3

Cut two 4cm (1½in) squares of the triangle fabric and the interfacing. Press the interfacing to the wrong side of the fabric pieces. Press under 6mm (¼in) on three edges. Starting at the raw edge, wrap the fabric around the overlapped cord ends, hand sew to the cord with small, neat stitches to conceal the cord ends.



Oilcloth lunch bag

By Kate Smith

A retro-style bag is just the thing for toting a tasty lunch or snack, and oilcloth is the perfect easy-clean material to use

Packing up a lunch for yourself or someone else can be comforting, and how cared-for would a person feel if it came in a specially handmade bag? This lunch bag mimics the shape and style of a classic brown paper bag by making a flat-based shape with a pinking-sheared edge. Oilcloth is great to work with – no fraying – and it's wipe-clean. The inner bag is easy to remove, and the name tag and bulldog clip add a special touch.

YOU WILL NEED

- Oilcloth fabric for lining: 56x34cm (22x13½in)
- Oilcloth fabric for outer: 56x36cm (22x14½in)
- Oilcloth fabric for tag: 16x7cm (6½x 2¾in)
- Thread in assorted colours
- Bulldog clip
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Optional extras

- Stazon inkpad
- Letter stamps
- Dry-wipe pen
- Baker's twine or ribbon: 35cm (13¾in)

Finished size

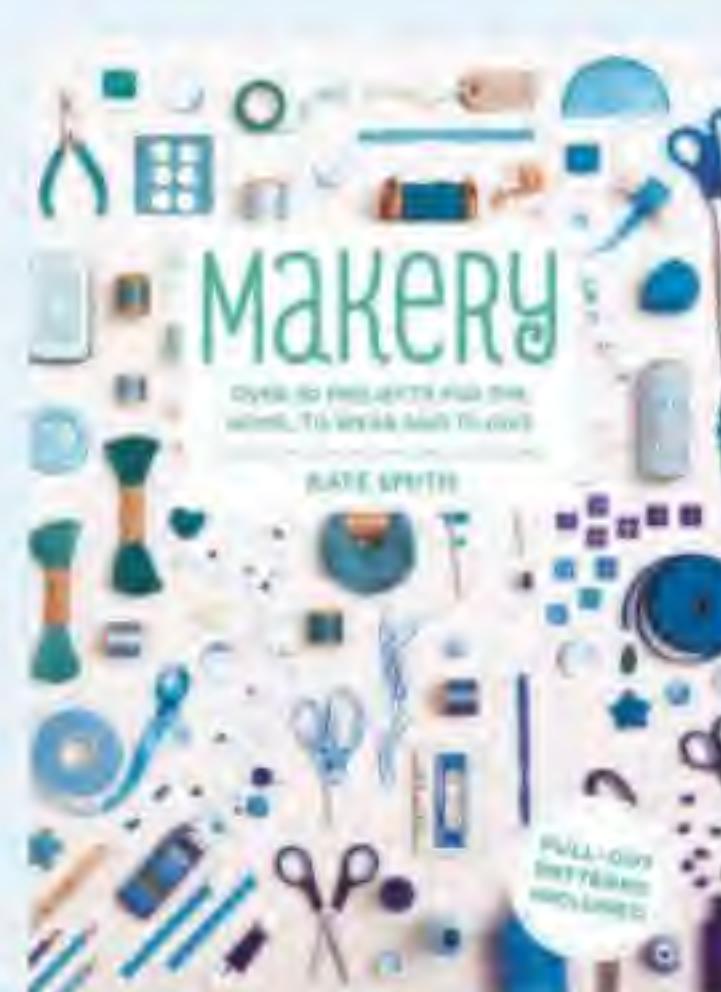
35x27cm (13¾x10½in)

Seam allowance

1cm (¼in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Makery
by Kate Smith

Here are 30 gorgeous projects arranged according to whether you want to make something to wear, something to adorn your home or something to give to someone. There's a very handy tips section, too, which is full of lessons Kate has learned along the way and generously shares with the world. Photography is by Aliki Kirmitsi and Ania Wawrzkowicz.

Published by Mitchell Beazley, PB, £14.99

www.octopusbooks.co.uk





MAKING THE LINING BAG

1

Trim the top 56cm (22in) edge of the lining oilcloth fabric with pinking shears.

2

Fold the oilcloth in half lengthways, matching up the two short edges, with right sides facing. Don't pin the oilcloth before sewing as it will leave holes in the fabric. Instead, use masking tape to hold edges together.

3

Thread up your machine with matching thread and set to straight stitch, stitch length 2.5–3. Stitch down the side and along the bottom with a 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) seam allowance to create a pocket.

4

Make the flat base of the bag: put your hand inside the (inside-out) bag and flatten out one of the corners to make a triangle, with the side seam that you have just sewn running down the middle of the triangle (fig.1). Secure with a pin (this time it won't matter if your pin marks the oilcloth as the point will be discarded).

5

With your pen or tailor's chalk, mark a line horizontally across the triangle, measuring 8cm (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ in) from edge to edge (fig.1). This line really does need to be horizontal, or your bag will be wonky. Machine stitch along the line, securing by reversing. Cut off the triangle point, leaving a 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) seam allowance. Repeat on the other corner.

Top tip
Use 'iron-on vinyl' to make your own oilcloth – simply iron the vinyl onto the fabric of your choice

MAKING THE OUTER BAG

1 FIRST FEW STEPS

Repeat steps 1–5 for making the lining, but with your outer oilcloth fabric. The only difference will be that your folded fabric in step 2 will be slightly larger.

2 DEFINE THE EDGES

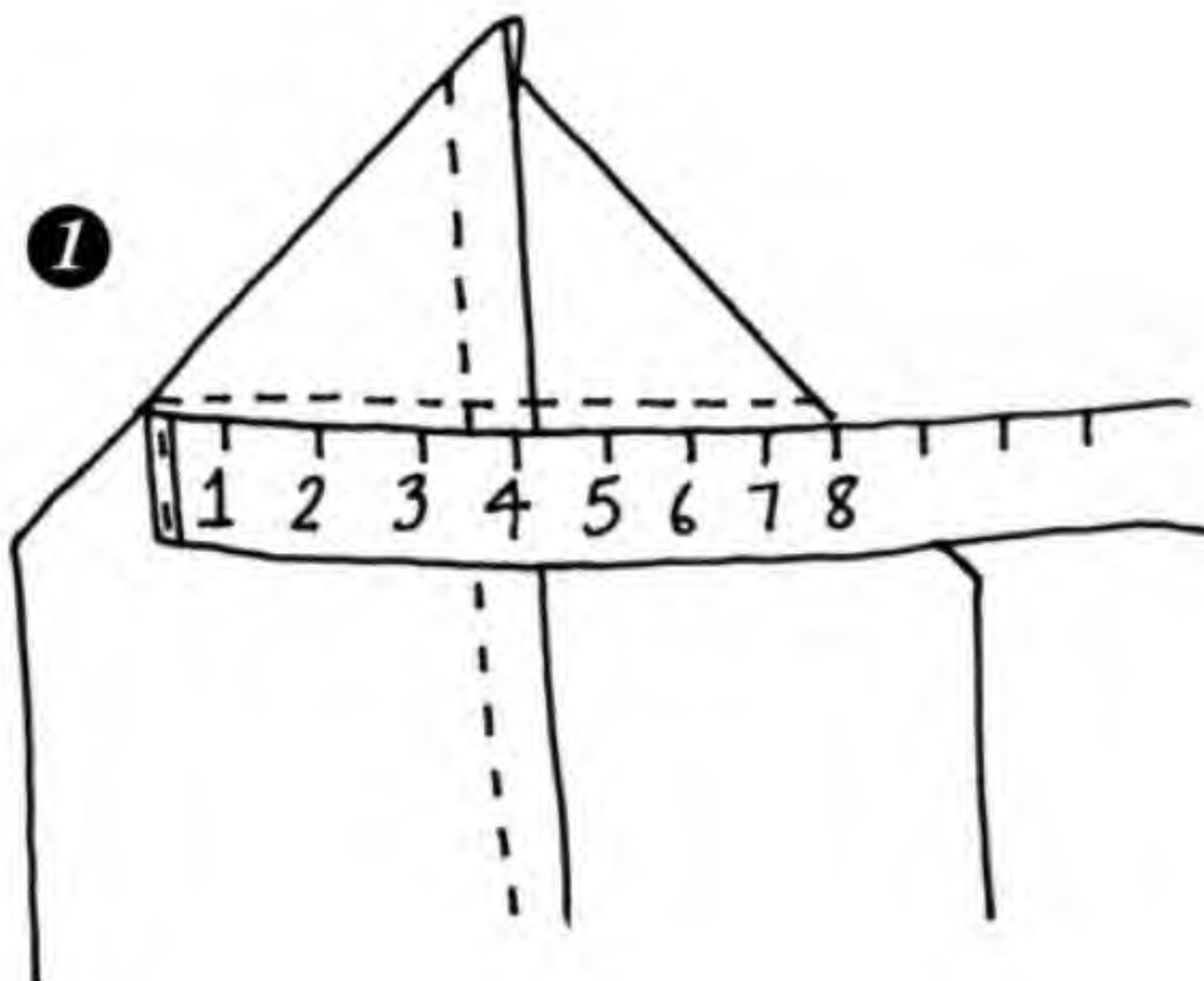
To create the defined edges on the side seams, take your outer bag and turn it right side out. Carefully crease the tall straight edges from the base to the top on all four corners of the bag. Finger-press the creases in place (fig.2).

3 CREATE CONTRAST

Change to contrasting thread on your machine and carefully sew the length of these folds close to the edge – with a 2mm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in) seam allowance – from the base to the top. Have a practice on a scrap first. To get a nice even line of stitching, line up the folded edge with a line on the plate below the presser foot. Reverse stitch at the start and end of each line to secure your sewing.

4 FINISH THE BAG

Sit the lining bag inside your outer bag, making sure the two bags fit together comfortably. To finish, fold over the top of your bag and secure the fold with the bulldog clip.





MAKING A TAG FOR YOUR BAG

1 STITCH THE SEAMS

Fold the fabric in half widthways, with wrong sides together, so you have a rectangle 8x7cm (3 1/4 x 2 3/4 in). Fold your baker's twine in half and place the folded end between the layers of your tag at the top. Then stitch around the outside, all four edges, leaving a 3mm (1/8 in) seam allowance.

2 WRITE A MESSAGE

Using your letter stamps and Stazonink, stamp a name or message on to the back of the tag. (Alternatively you could leave it blank for a message written in a dry-wipe pen.) When the ink is dry, tie the loose ends of baker's twine to the bulldog clip.



All about... MACHINE PATCHWORK

It's quick, it's nifty, it's rather addictive! Machine stitching is a great way to whip up pretty patchwork effects – we're here to show you how it's done

Machine-pieced patchwork is quicker to do and stronger than hand-pieced, but you do get a different effect and it's obviously less portable. Crafters often prefer one method to the other – or maybe it just depends on your mood!

FABRICS TO USE

Fabrics

The easiest fabrics to use for patchwork are closely woven, 100% cotton. They don't fray too much and are easy to cut and stitch together. Patchwork and quilting shops sell an amazing array of colours and patterns so it's easy to find fabrics that work together. They usually come in standard 115cm (45in) widths so you can buy a selection to join together.

Backing fabric

If you are quilting your patchwork you will also need to buy a backing fabric and one to bind it. Make sure these fabrics are the same weight as your main fabric. You can use a plain fabric that co-ordinates with the design on top, or be adventurous and choose a really interesting pattern or design so the back looks as good as the front. For binding, choose a fabric to co-ordinate with your top or one that will make the patchwork fabrics really stand out against it.

PLANNING YOUR DESIGN

Once you've chosen your fabric and decided on the pattern you want to create then the best thing to do is to draw a plan of your finished patchwork on graph paper. Add the measurements of each piece to this so you can see what the finished designs will look like. From this you need to write a cutting list, which should include the seam allowances for each piece too. A 6mm (1/4in) seam is standard for joining together patchwork

pieces but you can change this as long as you're consistent and add the same seam allowance to each piece.

CUTTING OUT

You can either cut out your patchwork pieces by hand or using a rotary cutter. If you're cutting out by hand then the best thing to do is draw your cutting lines in pencil or tailor's chalk on the back of your fabric. Use a sharp pair of dressmaking scissors to cut out all the pieces. Stack and label them so you know which piece goes where.

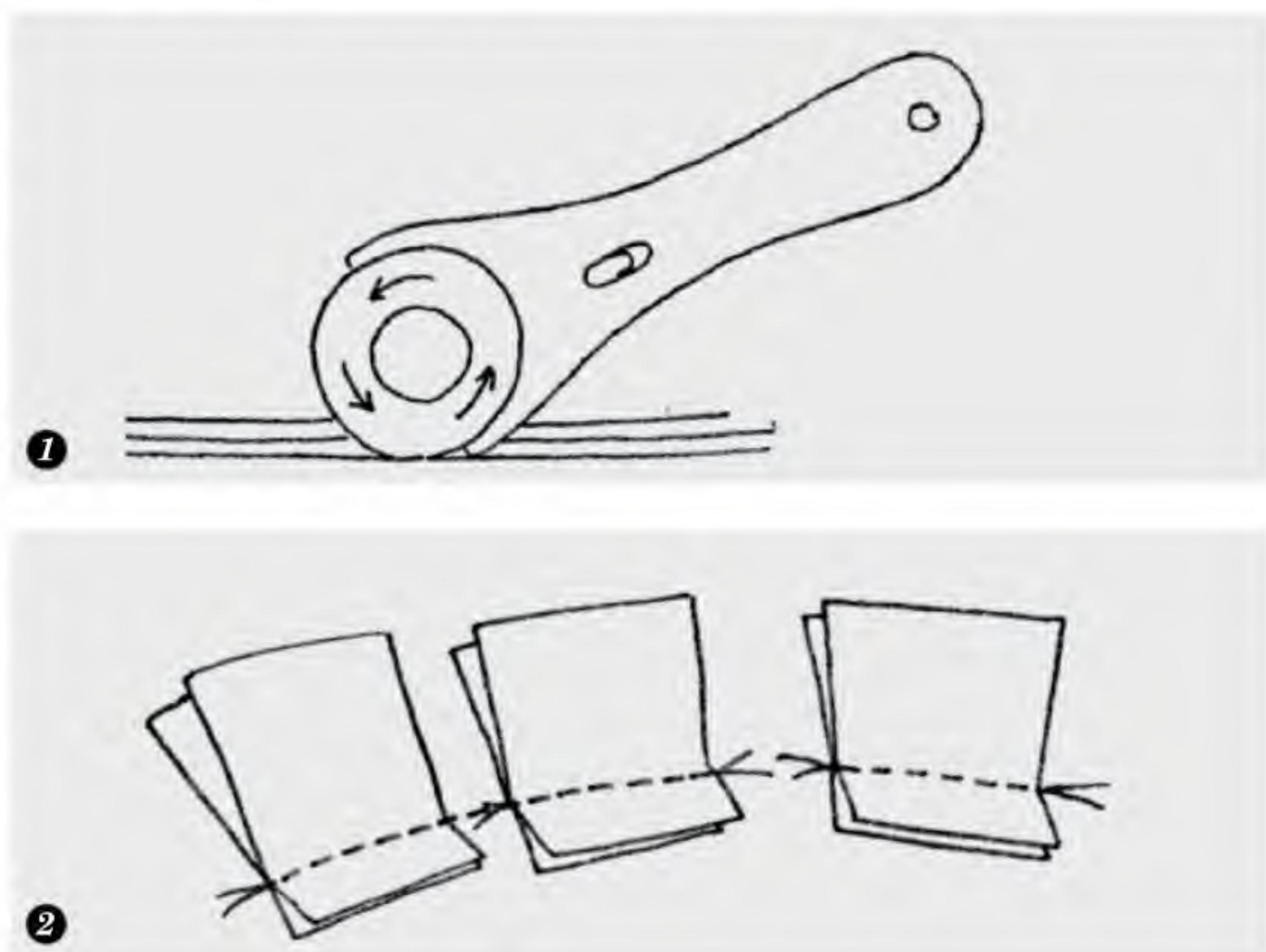
ROTARY CUTTING

It's far quicker and more accurate if you cut out your fabric using a rotary cutter. The basis of rotary cutting is that fabric is cut first in strips – usually across the width of the fabric, then cross-cut into squares or rectangles.

Press all your fabric pieces before you begin, but before you start cutting your strips make sure your fabric edge is straight and you remove the selvedge as this can pull the fabric out of shape. Put your fabric on your cutting mat, line up the selvedge with one of the lines on the mat then cut 1.5cm (1/2in) inside this to get a good straight edge. Use this edge as a guide for cutting out your fabric strips.

Always make sure your fabric is flat on the mat and smooth it out, then place the ruler on top with the edge placed the distance away from your straight edge that you want your strip to be. Hold the ruler steady on the fabric with your hand, applying enough pressure so it doesn't move. Run the rotary cutter along the ruler edge to cut a perfect strip (fig. 1).

Once you've cut your strips you can now cut these into the shapes you want your finished pieces to be.





JOINING THE PIECES TOGETHER

You will have decided your seam allowance when you cut the fabric pieces out so make sure you use this when you stitch them together. Your sewing machine will have seam allowances marked on it so all you need to do is place the two pieces of fabric to be joined right sides together and stitch, making sure the raw edges of the fabric run along the sewing machine line to get an accurately placed seam.

If you want to be sure you have the correct seam allowance, unthread your machine and stitch through a piece of paper, lining up the edge of it on the seam allowance line. Now remove the paper and check that the holes that have been created are the correct distance from the edge of the paper. If it isn't exactly right then redo it – you can always mark this seam allowance on the bed of your machine with a piece of masking tape. You only really need to do this if you're using a non-standard seam allowance that's not marked on your machine.

Use a thread that matches your fabric so the stitches won't show on the right side.

CHAIN PIECING

This is a great technique for joining lots of fabric pieces together and saves you having to start and stop your thread each time. Put all the pairs of patches or strips together ready in a pile. Place the first pair in the machine, right sides together, and stitch. Just before you reach the end, stop stitching and pick up the next pair. Place them on the bed of the machine, so that they just touch the first pair of patches, then stitch the next pair straight after the first. Continue this until you've stitched all the pairs together in a chain (fig. 2). You can cut the threads between each pair to separate them.

PRESSING

It's best to press your seams open or to one side (whichever you prefer) after you've stitched them and before you join them to other pieces. This will give you a neater and more accurate finish, and also makes the stitching a lot easier.

ADDING THE BORDERS

Most patchwork quilts have borders around them. To find out how to add a border, see the instructions on p66. You can either add borders to the patchwork before you quilt it or quilt the whole piece first and add borders later, in the form of binding. A narrow 6mm (1/4in) binding will neatly finish off a small quilt, but use a deeper 5cm (2in) binding for a larger quilt.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED



Rotary cutter

There are several brands, mainly in three sizes: small, medium and large. Medium is the most commonly used for patchwork. The blade is extremely sharp, so be careful when you use it. You slide it open for use so remember to close it as soon as you've finished. The blades do go blunt so replace yours when it starts to 'miss' threads.



Self-healing cutting mat

This is essential for rotary cutting – don't use a rotary cutter without one. You can buy them in a variety of shapes and sizes, usually with a measured grid printed on one side. Buy the biggest one that will fit on your table so you can avoid having to cut fabric in stages, which can give an uneven edge.



Rotary cutting ruler

These are made from acrylic and must be used with a rotary cutter. Don't use metal rulers, as the metal will blunt the blade if you accidentally cut into it. The rulers are marked with measurements and angled lines to use as a guide when cutting fabrics. There are a variety of sizes and shapes you can buy.



Scissors (fabric and paper)
Make sure these are sharp, and never use your fabric scissors on paper or they'll go blunt.



Pins

Long pins with glass heads are ideal as they'll hold the fabric securely together and you can iron over the heads without melting them.



Needles

For hand quilting you'll need betweens needles. For tacking fabric layers together, it's best to use longer crewel needles.



Pieceful easy scarf

By Susan Wasinger

With some help from a washing machine you can reinvent your neglected woollen jumpers into a vibrant patchwork scarf

Up to your neck in old jumpers? Have you ever accidentally washed your favourite woollen jumper in really hot water and had it come out looking like a tea cosy? Although it's a sad day for your jumper, it's just that transformation that makes this scrumptiously soft scarf possible. Fun to mix and match, simple to stitch together, it's a great way to make a warm and fuzzy scarf without ever touching a knitting needle.

A sewing machine can make light work of patchwork, letting you quickly stitch together dozens of pieces of fabric to create unique garments. And with the washing machine taking care of the felting process, this is a really easy project!

YOU WILL NEED

- About six 100% wool jumpers (not machine washable) - in addition to sheep's wool, you could consider cashmere, alpaca and angora
- Threads in assorted colours
- Washing machine/dryer
- Small piece of stiff cardboard
- Pen
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

23x191cm (9x75in)

Seam allowance

6mm (1/4in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



The Feisty Stitcher
by Susan Wasinger

Susan Wasinger looks at a sewing machine and sees endless possibilities! *The Feisty Stitcher* contains 20 projects that encourage you to experiment with your machine, from punching holes in non-fabric materials, to playing with seams to create 3D objects. With a focus on recycling and using unusual materials, this is a treasure trove of unique ideas.

Published by Lark, PB, £12.99

www.larkcrafts.com





1



2



4



5

FELTING THE SWEATER

Start with 100% wool-fibre sweaters (sheep's wool, cashmere, angora or alpaca) in a variety of colours and patterns. Machine-wash them on a hot cycle and tumble dry in a hot dryer. This will shrink and tangle the fibres to make a dense, fray-free felted fabric that's warm, fuzzy and easy to work with. Repeat the process if necessary to get a satisfying level of felting.

MAKING THE SCARF

1

Cut out a 9x21cm (3½x8in) cardboard rectangle. Use this cardboard template to cut 28 'bricks' out of the felted sweaters (fig. 1).

2

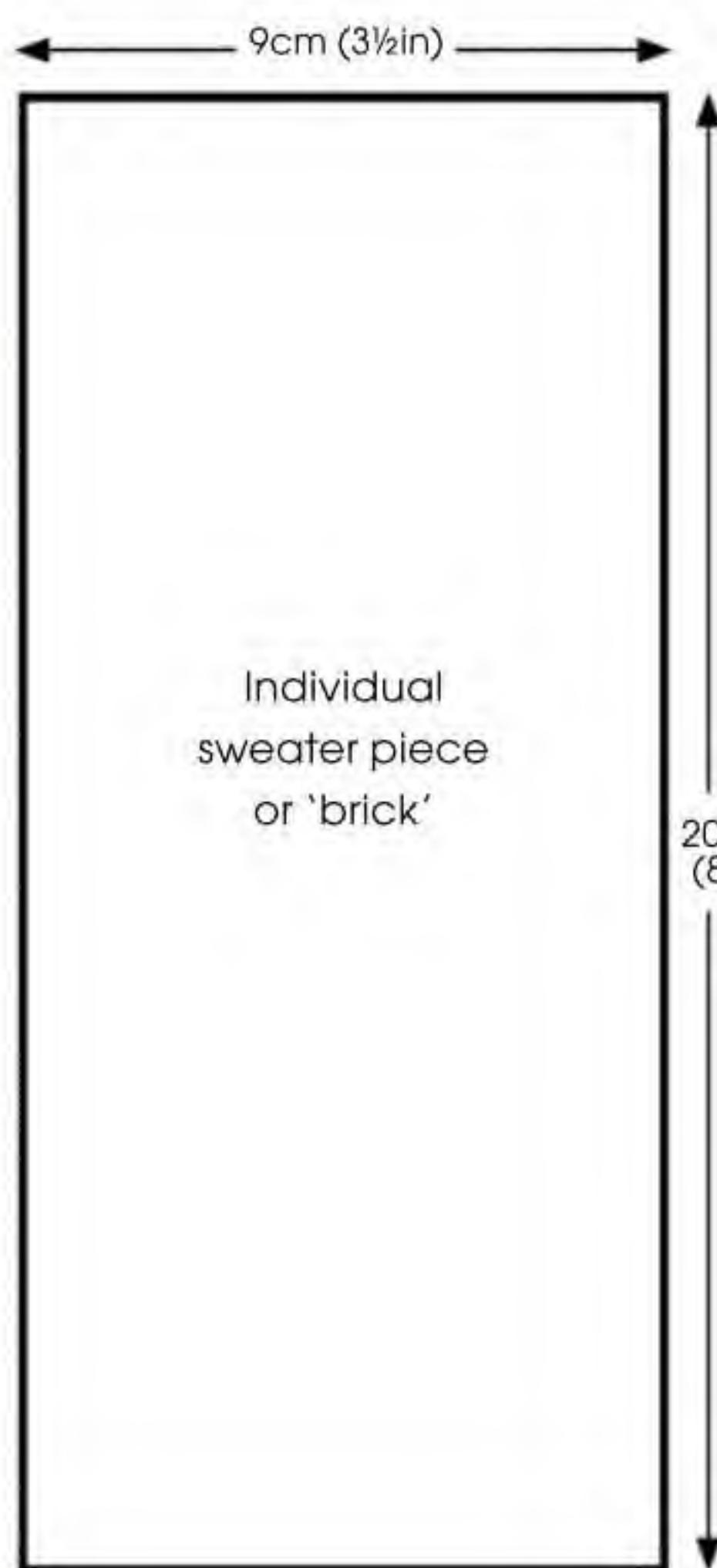
Set your machine to an overcast stitch (a wide zigzag works too). Experiment with a fabric scrap until you get the width you want. Pin together two bricks along the short end, overlapping each piece about 6mm (¼in). Sew together with the overcast stitch (fig. 2).



3

TEMPLATE

Using the dimensions shown, draw this template onto plain paper to make a pattern



6

3

Make the side edges straight by snipping off any 'bulge' created by the seam. Then trim the seam so it's flush to the stitching on both sides of the scarf. Repeat steps 1, 2, and 3 to make two nine-brick-long columns and one 10-brick-long column (fig. 3 and 4).

4

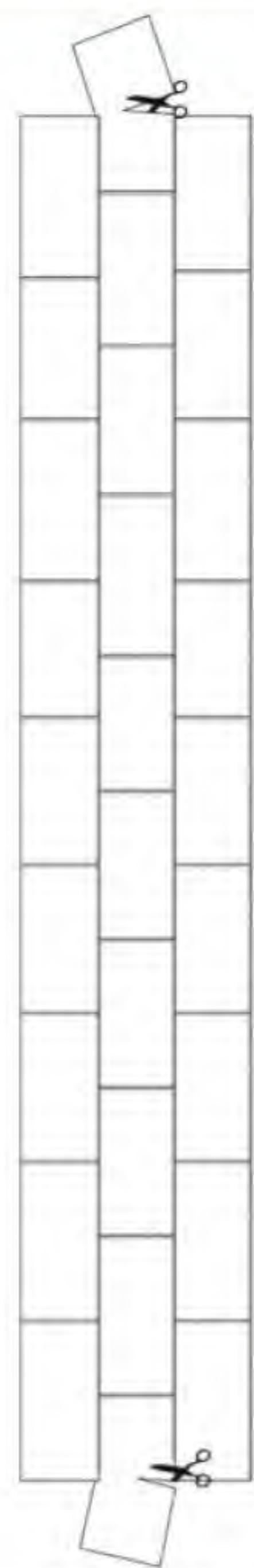
Pin the 10-brick column to one nine-brick column on the long side. Let the seams offset by about half a brick, top to bottom, to make a more interesting pattern. Overlap the two columns about 6mm (1/4 in) and pin, sew and trim just as before (fig. 5).

5

Add the third column (the other nine-brick one) on the other side of the 10-brick column. Pin, sew and trim as before. Cut the excess length off the 10-brick column to even up the scarf's top and bottom. You can use a warm iron to flatten and square up the scarf. Trim any uneven edges or errant threads to finish (fig. 6).



Top tip
You could make the scarf larger by making the individual 'bricks' a little wider or taller - or smaller, if you prefer





Patchwork seat pad

By Chris Jefferys

Spruce up basic wooden chairs with these easy-sew seat pads! They're a fun way to give your dining room a fresh new look!

You don't need to be a master upholsterer to brighten up tired or plain chairs. These fun, floral seat pads are a great way to practise your new patchwork skills using just a few pieces of fabric from your stash.

All you need to do is piece together a patchwork top piece, fill it with wadding for a comfy finish, then finish with no-fuss fabric ties. We've used bold floral prints, but switching the fabrics will quickly alter the finish to match the rest of your decor.

Give it an outdoors twist by making a version with sturdy fabrics for garden chairs or pick a sweet, pastel print and you could alter this project to fit a rocking chair in a baby's nursery. The options are endless, so pick a chair and have some fun!

YOU WILL NEED

- Three different print fabrics for the patchwork squares
- Pattern paper
- Fabric for seat pad back
- Fabric for the seat ties: 36x20cm (14x8in)
- Medium weight wadding
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

To match your chair

Seam allowance

1.5cm (1/2in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Weekend Projects: Soft Furnishings
by Chris Jefferys

Here's a collection of 50 gorgeous soft furnishing projects for your home. Divided into four sections (Beds, Chairs, Tables and Windows), instructions are accompanied by step-by-step illustrations. Many items are easy to make but, with practice, beginners can graduate to more complex projects, such as lined curtains and fitted bed linen.

Published by New Holland, HB, £9.99
www.newhollandpublishers.com



CUTTING OUT THE FABRIC

Start by making a paper pattern, using pattern paper, to match the size and shape of your chair seat.

Patchwork squares: take your seat pattern and measure the distance front to back and side to side. Take the longest of these two measurements and divide by three to calculate the size of one square. Add 1.5cm (½in) seam allowance all the way round to this square. Cut nine squares of patterned fabric to match this measurement.

For the chair seat ties, cut four pieces of fabric, each measuring 36x5cm (14x2in).

Top tip

Use matching ribbon or cotton tape to make ties if you prefer

SEWING THE SEAT PAD

1 SEW A PATCHWORK ROW

Take three of your patchwork squares and sew them right sides together into one long strip to make the top row. Trim the seam allowances and press open.

2 MAKE TWO MORE ROWS

Stitch the middle row and bottom row in the same way. If you want a balanced finished design, number your three different patchwork fabrics and then vary the order in which you stitch them together – for example 1, 2, 3 for the top row, 3, 1, 2 for the middle row and 2, 3, 1 for the bottom row. If you prefer a random look, just stitch them together in any order you think looks best.

3 JOIN THEM TOGETHER

Now stitch your three patchwork rows right sides together by sewing along their long edges, to create a large square patchwork panel (fig. 1).

4 MAKE THE FRONT PIECE

Place your paper pattern (see 'Cutting out the fabric') onto the patchwork square you made in step 3. Add a 1.5cm (½in) seam allowance all around the pattern then trace this shape and cut out (fig. 2).

5 MAKE THE BACK PIECE

Take your piece of backing fabric and cut it to match exactly the same shape and size as your finished front piece from step 4.

6 CREATE YOUR CHAIR TIES

To do this, take your first piece of seat tie fabric and press 1cm (½in) to the wrong side across both short ends, and along both long edges. Fold the tie in half lengthways, wrong sides together and press again. Stitch down the length of the tie.

7 POSITION THE TIES

Place the ties on to the right side of the pad front, positioning them in pairs at each of the two back corners. Arrange the ends of the ties level with the raw edge and stitch in place, 1.5cm (½in) from the edge.

8 SEW IT ALL UP

Place your back and front pad pieces right sides together. Stitch the two pieces together, starting and finishing on the back edge, 5cm (2in) in from the corners, leaving an opening along the back edge. Trim the corners, then press all the seams open, including the opening. Turn the pad right side out, and press again for a neat finish.

9 AND FINALLY...

Cut your wadding to the same size as the finished pad then slip it through the opening along the back edge. Tuck in the raw edges along the opening then hand stitch the opening closed using small slip stitches. Tie your pad to the back of the chair, finishing your ties in a bow.

1



2





All about... MACHINE APPLIQUÉ

Sewing on appliquéd patches is a doddle with the help of a sewing machine... we show you how to get expert-looking results with the minimum of effort

Machine appliquéd is quicker to work than hand appliquéd but you get quite a different effect. The appliquéd shapes are more securely sewn on, but the machine stitches give them a more solid edge so your finished piece will be less flexible and delicate than hand appliquéd.

It's trickier to machine stitch intricate shapes as it's harder to move them round your machine. If you are appliquéd on to a large piece of fabric, such as a quilt, then it can be more difficult to get it all under your machine.

However, stitchers tend to prefer one method over the other, or to choose depending on the project. If the item or garment you are appliquéd on is going to have a lot of wear then machine appliquéd is the best option as it's more secure.

ATTACHING YOUR APPLIQUÉ SHAPES

The easiest way to machine appliquéd is by sticking your fabric shapes to your base fabric with a fusible web first. This will keep them securely in place, which is particularly important when you are moving the fabric round under your machine needle. For detailed instructions on how to appliquéd shapes in this method see p95. Alternatively, you can simply cut out the shapes you want to apply then tack them securely in place before you stitch – the choice is yours!

CHOOSING THE THREAD

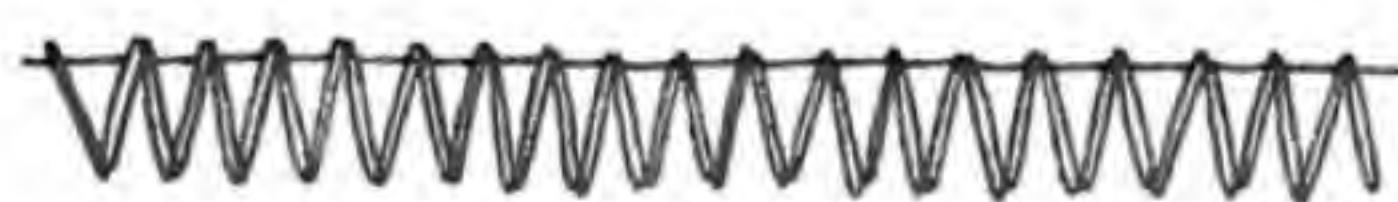
First decide what thread you are going to use to stitch your appliquéd shapes into place. There is plenty of choice and to start with it's best to use a cotton or polyester thread in a colour that matches your fabric. As you become more practised you can experiment with other threads such as metallic, iridescent, matching, contrasting or even invisible thread, to see what effects you like.

Practice using these different threads on spare fabric first to see the different

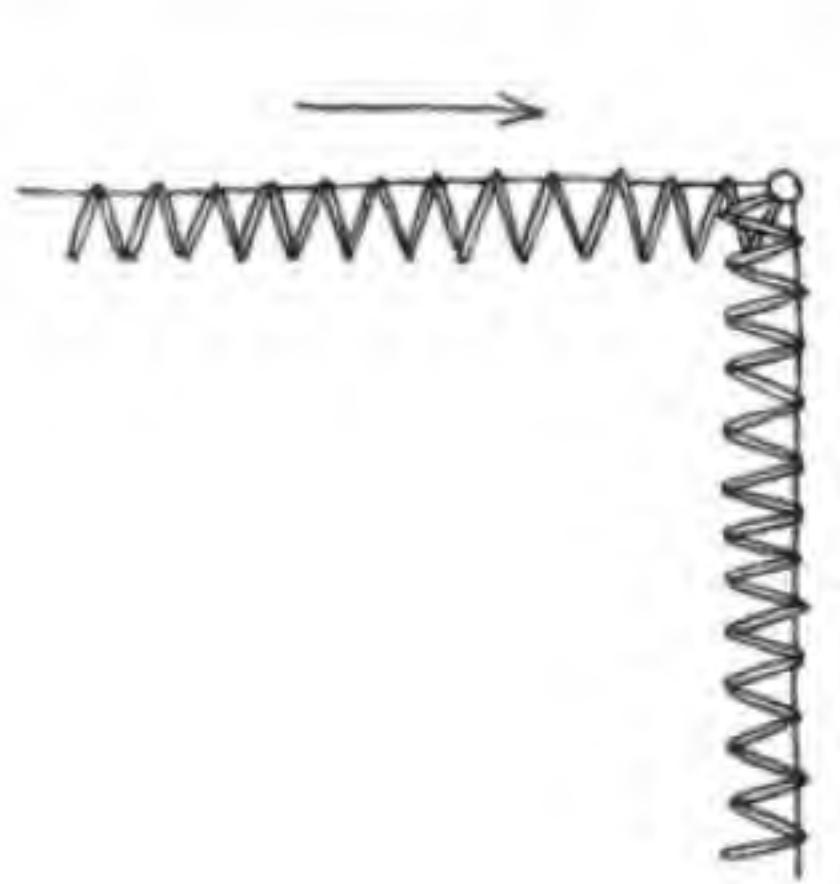
effects you can create. If you are using a contrasting thread then you need to be particularly careful with your stitching as it will show up more. But, once you have mastered this, then the stitching can become an important and intricate part of your design.

STITCHING THE APPLIQUÉ

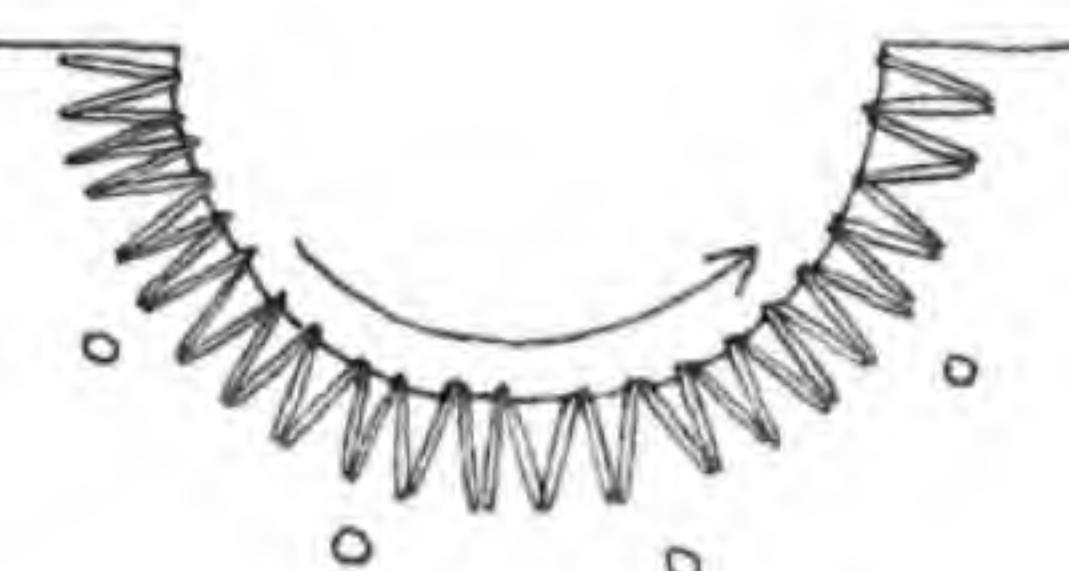
The most common stitch used for machine appliquéd is a zigzag stitch (fig. 1) as it secures the shape into place without being too dominant. You need a fairly



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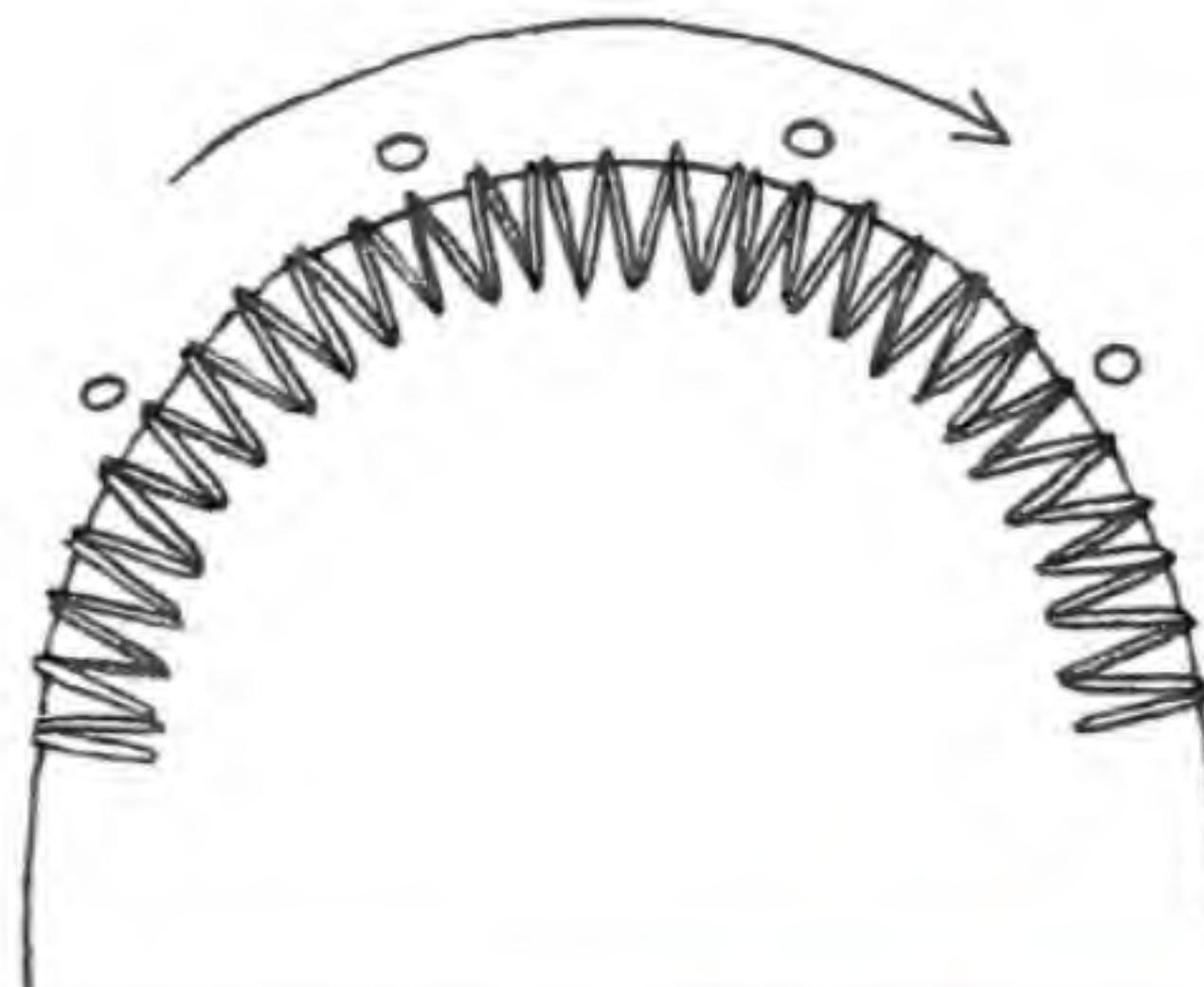


2



3

Top tip
Although zigzag is the most popular stitch, others work too so try a few experiments!



4

close zigzag so the fabric won't fray but not too tight or the stitching will be too dense. A stitch width between 1mm and 3mm ($\frac{1}{24}$ – $\frac{1}{8}$ in) wide is about right.

Set the stitch length just above (not at) the satin-stitch setting, or between 0.5 and 1mm. Practice setting the stitch width and length on spare fabric until you are happy with the finished effect.

Using a clear presser foot, line up your applique shape right in the middle of your foot, so that the needle will go into the fabric right at the very edge. Take a few very small straight stitches along the edge of the shape to secure the thread.

Now stitch round the shape so that the needle goes into the fabric just outside the space and into the fabric again just inside the fabric shape.

To finish off work a few stitches backwards to secure the thread.

STITCHING CORNERS

If your shape has corners, manually place your needle right at the corner, in the main fabric. Lift your presser foot, pivot the fabric until it is aligned, then begin stitching again (fig. 2).

STITCHING CURVES

On larger, more gradual curves, stitch slowly round the curves, easing the fabric as you go, to achieve a smooth line of stitches. On smaller or tighter curves, pivot the needle in the same way as for corners, only move the fabric round a little so you just work round the curve gradually. A really good way of achieving smooth curves is to mark your shape with the 12 positions of the clock before you begin. Then, as you are stitching, pivot the needle at each marked position and you will get a smooth curved edge.

USING STABILISER

Stabilisers are really important in machine applique, especially when you're using a zigzag stitch, particularly the satin stitch. This is because it keeps your stitches even and stops the fabric from pulling out of shape. There are various makes of stabiliser you can buy, so ask for advice at your local fabric shop – or one can be bought online.

- Place a piece of stabiliser that is larger than your applique shape beneath the base fabric you are appliqueing onto.
- Stitch the applique fabric on in the usual way.
- Once you have finished all your stitching you can remove it from beneath and just the stitches are left stabilised.

STITCHING INSIDE CURVES

Stop stitching at the first pivot point with the needle down in the applique, rather than the base, fabric. Now raise the machine foot, move the fabric round slightly then stitch to the next pivot point. Continue in this way until you have stitched the whole curve (fig. 3).

STITCHING OUTSIDE CURVES

Work these in the same way as for inside curves, but pivot with the needle down in the base, rather than the applique, fabric instead (fig. 4).

USING DIFFERENT MACHINE STITCHES FOR APPLIQUE

Your sewing machine might have many different stitches you never normally use. But, with machine applique, here is your chance to try them out. Always practice first on a scrap of fabric and experiment by using different stitch lengths and widths with each one.

Zigzag stitch

This is the most common applique stitch, but you can achieve two very different-looking stitches with the zigzag, depending on the settings used on your machine. Closely worked stitches will form a satin zigzag while more open stitches will produce a narrow zigzag.

Straight stitch

Though this won't stop your fabric from fraying as much as a zigzag stitch, it gives a more homespun frayed edge to machine applique. It works well with stretchy materials, such as t-shirt fabrics.

Blanket stitch

Some sewing machines have up to five blanket stitches – choose the one you like most. Make sure you work it so it just overlaps the edge of the applique shape in the same way as you would with zigzag.

Other stitches

Try all the stitches on your machine to see which you like the best. Decorative stitches like scalloped or wavy stitches can look really effective.



Chequered tea cosy

By Debbie Shore

Keep your teapot warm with this pretty cosy. Use fabrics that co-ordinate with your kitchen décor to add a stylish touch

There are few things as satisfying as finishing a sewing project that you can use every day – and who doesn't enjoy a daily tea break? This tea cosy design is really versatile, as you can not only choose fabrics to complement your kitchen, but you can come up with any appliqué design that takes your fancy!

We've suggested a simple 'TEA' logo and a heart embellished with buttons, but once you've mastered the basic cosy pattern you can rustle up any design you like – why not make personalised cosies for tea-loving friends, or experiment with more complex shapes such as stars?

YOU WILL NEED

- Two pieces of fabric for outer layer: 35.5x30.5cm (14x12in)
- Two pieces of fabric for the lining: same size as above
- Two pieces of fabric for wadding: same size as above
- Contrast fabric for appliqué: about 20.5x13cm (8x5in)
- Fabric adhesive spray
- A large dinner plate to use as a template
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

29.5x34.5cm (11½x13½in)

Seam allowance

6mm (¼in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Half Yard
Heaven



Half Yard Heaven
by Debbie Shore

Fabric left over from sewing projects, or old shirts and pillow cases that aren't yet ready for the scrap heap, come in handy for little projects that don't require a great deal of fabric. In this book you'll find lovely ideas, with full instructions, for making 26 items to wear, use, give away, play with or simply to treasure. Easy to make, they can be completed in a day or a weekend.

Published by Search Press, PB, £9.99

www.searchpress.com



1



2



3

MAKING THE TEA COSY

1 Lay out the patterned fabric with the longer sides at the top and bottom and place the plate on top, with the edge of the plate touching the top edge of the fabric. Draw the arc shape around the top of the plate then cut it out to make the shape of the tea cosy.

2 Repeat step 1 on the wadding and lining fabric.

3 Cut out the letters T, E and A, or a simple heart shape, from your contrasting fabric so they fit within your cut tea cosy shape. Tack your appliquéd motifs to the right side of one piece of patterned fabric.

4 If you are adding embellishments, such as buttons or charms, sew them on at this stage.

5 Sew around the motif with a zigzag stitch on your machine (fig. 1).

6 Put the patterned fabric face down, spray with fabric adhesive and place the wadding on top.

7 Turn the fabric over, so it's face up, and put the lining on top. Don't use fabric adhesive this time.

8 Sew across the straight bottom of all three layers, using a 6mm (1/4in) seam allowance.

9 Repeat step 8 on the other side of the tea cosy.

10 Fold back the lining so that you are looking at two large oval shapes that are half lining and half patterned (fig. 2).

11 Place the two halves of the cosy together, right sides facing and seams matching, and sew all the way round. Leave a gap in the lining side of around 10cm (4in) for turning (fig. 3).

12 Turn right sides out, press your new tea cosy with a moderate iron, invite some friends round, then put the kettle on and relax!

Floral shopping bag

By Chris Jefferys

Simple designs look great when they're appliquéd... pretty daisies turn this shopping bag into an eye-catching accessory

The versatility of appliquéd means that in many ways the only limit to what you can make is your imagination. This plain bag has been brightened up with a simple daisy design, but you can piece together any shapes that you like.

A big advantage of making your own bag means you can choose a lining in a colour or pattern than co-ordinates with your appliquéd design. Bear in mind that if you're using a patterned fabric such as gingham or tartan then it's good to line up the pattern with the edge of the bag for a neat finish.

The daisy template here needs to be enlarged to give you two flowers (a large one and a small one), but you could always shrink it, too – a row of small ones across the bottom will look very pretty.

YOU WILL NEED

- Fabric, such as calico, for the bag: 55x94cm (22x37in)
- Fabric for lining: 36x94cm (14x37in)
- Heavyweight iron-on interfacing: 36x94cm (14x37in)
- Fusible web: 50x45cm (20x18in)
- Fabric scraps for appliquéd
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

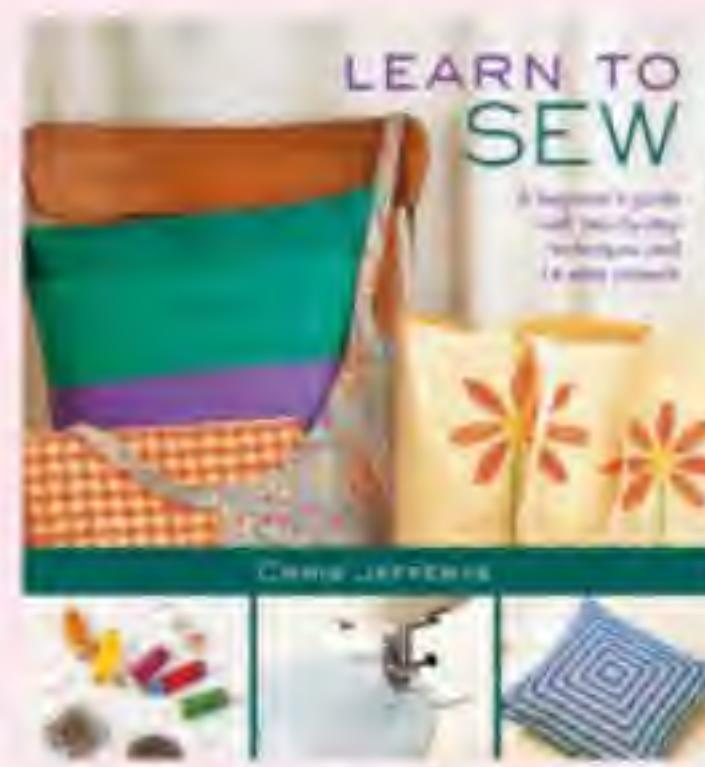
28.5x37cm (11x14½in)

Seam allowance

1.5cm (5/8in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Learn To Sew
by Chris Jefferys

With a series of tutorials that gradually introduce new techniques, *Learn To Sew* is a great resource for anyone who's keen to pick up the basics of sewing. As well as guides on making items from scratch, the book also boasts a wealth of advice on making simple alterations, such as taking up hems or moving buttons – perfect for breathing new life into old favourites!

Published by New Holland, PB, £7.99

www.newhollandpublishers.com





CUTTING OUT THE FABRIC

1 FOR THE BAG

Cut out a paper pattern 47cm (18½in) wide by 36cm (14¼in) deep (this includes 1.5cm (½in) seam allowances). Using the pattern, cut two pieces each from the calico, interfacing and lining.

Cut two handles 60x9cm (23½x3½in) from the calico.

2 FOR THE FLOWERS

Mark an area on your paper pattern 6cm (2¼in) in from the side and base edges and 1.5cm (½in) down from the top edge of your front piece. Enlarge and trace the small and large flower design from the template and transfer it to the pattern, keeping within the marked area.



SEWING THE BAG

1

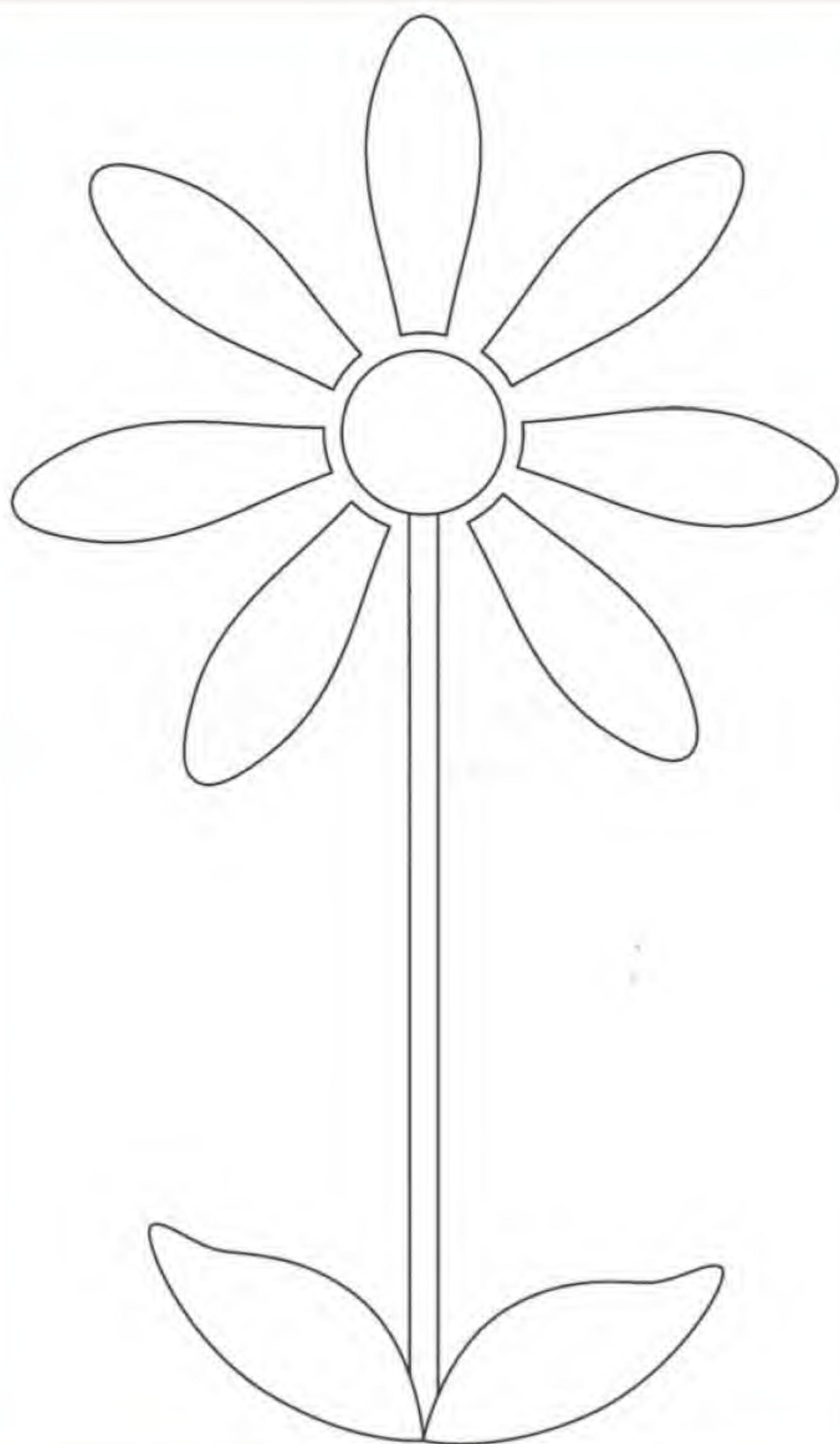
Apply the fusible web to the wrong side of the calico pieces. Lightly mark the positions for the flower stems on the front area on one calico piece. Adjust the machine to a wide, close zigzag stitch and stitch the stems in satin stitch. Pull the thread end through to the wrong side and knot together to finish. Cut out and apply the appliquéd design, using fusible web and following instructions on p95. Stitch around the edges with a zigzag stitch.

2

Stitch the two calico pieces facing together around the side and base edges. Stitch the linings together in the same way, but leave a 15cm (6in) gap on the base edge. Press the seams open.

3

Open out the lower corners and refold them diagonally so the side and base seams are on top of the other at the centre of the point. Stitch across at right angles to the seams 4.5cm (1½in) in from the point (for instructions on this technique see p132). Trim the point away above the stitching. Stitch the lining corners in the same way.



TEMPLATE

Trace or photocopy this template to make patterns, as follows:

Large flower: 145%

Small flower: 125%



4

Press down 1.5cm (5/8in) to the wrong side along both long edges of the handles. Then press the handles in half lengthways and stitch along both long edges. With the handles pointing downwards, pin and tack their ends to the top edge of the bag 11cm (4 1/4in) in from the side seams.

5

Place the lining to the bag with right sides facing and the top edges level so the handles are sandwiched, and stitch the lining to the bag around the top edge. Turn the bag right side out through the gap in the lining stitching. Hand stitch the gap in the lining closed. Press the lining to the inside of the bag and topstitch around the top edge to finish.

MAKING A FIRM BASE

1 CUT THE CARD

A fabric-covered cardboard insert will give the bag a firm base and help it keep its shape. First, cut the cardboard to the size of the base of the bag, then cut a piece of lining fabric that's twice as wide as the card, plus seam allowances all round.

2 MAKE A FABRIC SLEEVE

Fold the fabric in half lengthways and stitch together along one short and one long edge. Turn the fabric right side out and press. Slip the cardboard into the fabric, tuck in the raw edges and hand stitch them together. Lie the cardboard in the bottom of the bag.



All about... FILLED SHAPES

Make toys, cushions, sachets and a myriad of other stuffed objects... it's easy when you know how to make a shape and fill it

Making three-dimensional stitched items or filled shapes are really just an extension of your other sewing skills. You need to be able to cut out fabric pieces accurately, stitch them together, then stuff them. Sewing neat seams and working small hand stitches, then embellishing with embroidery, is all there is to it.

Follow these instructions and ideas to help you make gorgeous stuffed animals, decorations or items for your home.

CUTTING PATTERN PIECES

You need to make sure you cut out all your fabric pieces accurately before you begin. If you are following a pattern from a book or magazine then templates for the pieces will be printed there. Check first to see if a seam allowance has been included. In most cases it will have been, but, if not, then make sure you add your own everywhere there is a seam – 1.5cm (½in) is about right, but remember to be consistent. Trace each pattern shape (remembering to add the seam allowance if you need to) or cut it out if you are using a pre-printed pattern paper.

PINNING INTO PLACE

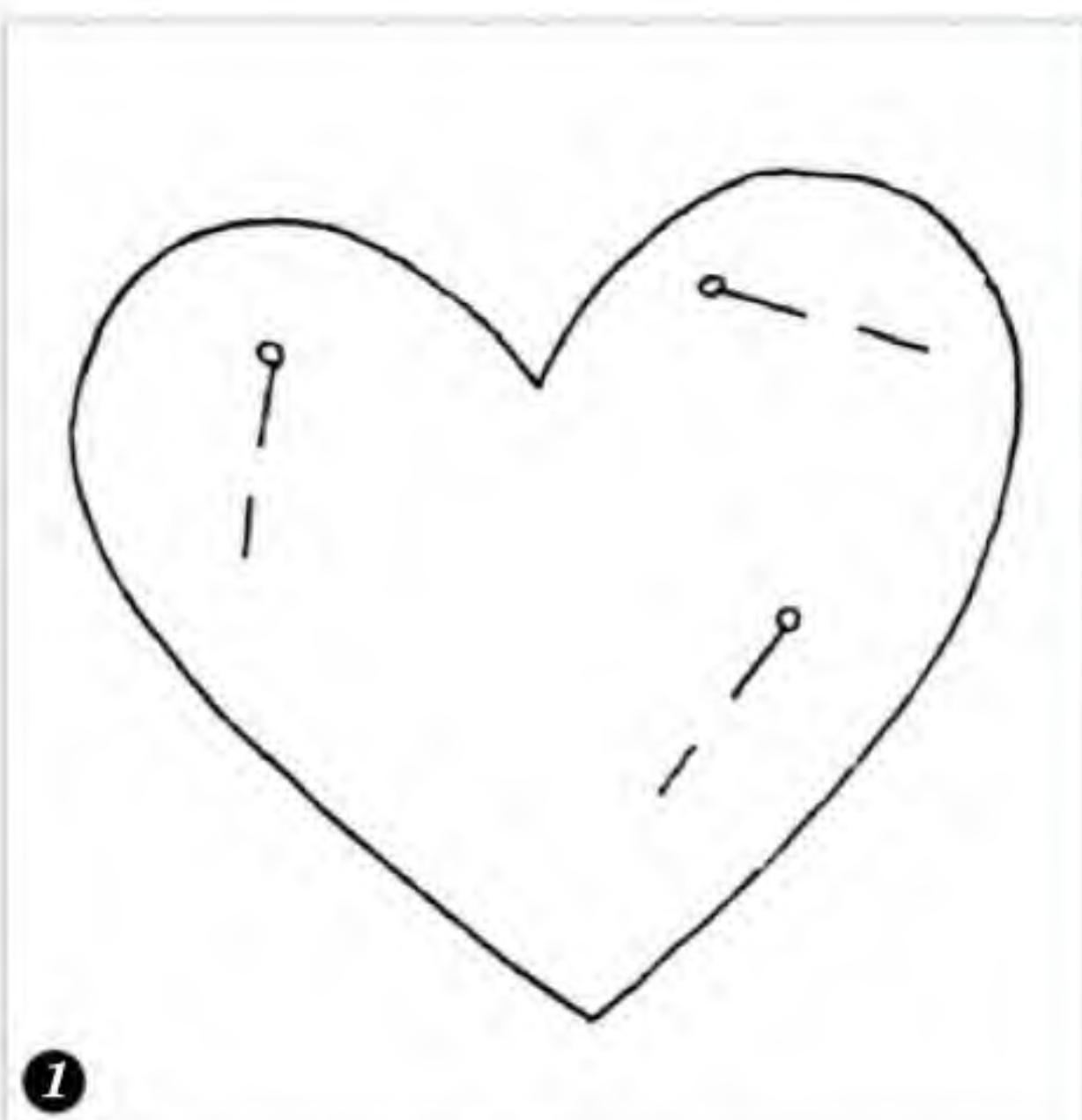
Pin each pattern piece to the right side of your fabric (fig. 1). Make sure you look at the grain lines printed on the pattern. If they don't have them then think logically which way each piece will face. This is particularly important if you are using a patterned fabric as the pattern should run in the same direction when you join up all the pieces. If you need to match a pattern then think about this too when you are pinning your patterns on.

CUTTING THE FABRIC

Cut out each shape carefully and either keep the pattern pieces pinned to the fabric just until you stitch, or label them.

STITCHING TOGETHER

Following the instructions given with the pattern, stitch each piece together using a consistent seam allowance. It's really important to remember that you will need to leave a gap in one seam so you can turn your assembled fabric pieces right sides out for stuffing (fig. 2). It's best to leave this gap along a straight seam if at all possible as that will be easier to sew



1

back up accurately with a small slip stitch than on a corner seam.

TRIMMING AND CLIPPING SEAMS

Once you have stitched the seams, clip curves and snip corners to help the seams lie flat when turned right sides out (fig. 3). For more intricate shapes, trim seam allowances to 6mm (¼in) so they don't add too much bulk to your finished shape.

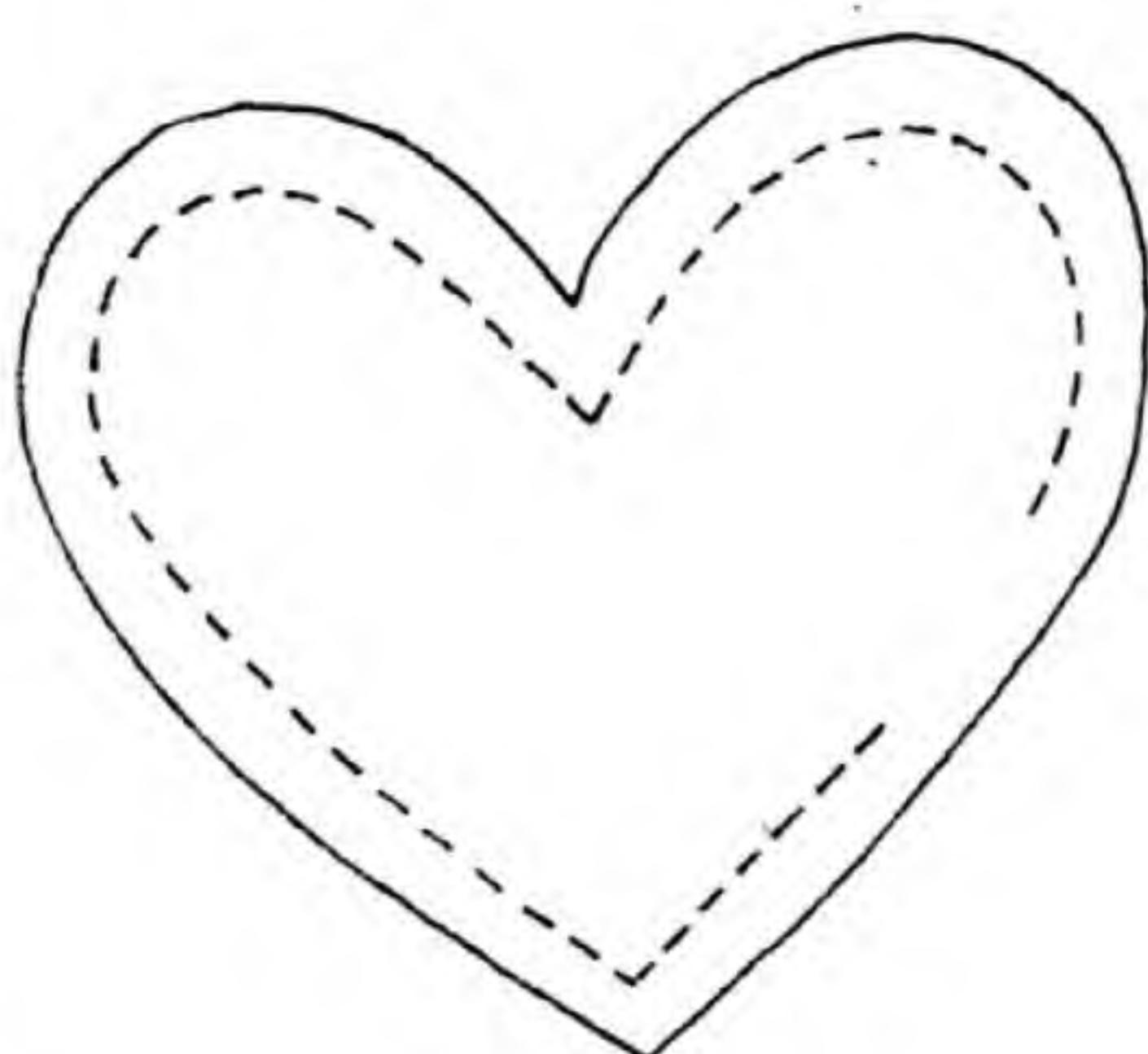
STUFFING THE SHAPE

FILLINGS

Normally you would use polyester soft toy filling for stuffing your filled shape but there are other choices if you prefer:

- Dry, uncooked rice is ideal for weighing down doorstops.
- Polystyrene beads are good if you want to make a flexible bean bag type of effect.
- Use dried lavender or pot pourri to mix with your filling, or if it's a small shape then use just this for a really fragrant shape, which is perfect for hanging on your coat hangers in the wardrobe.
- Sawdust makes really good stuffing for stuffing pincushions, or use fine sand to keep pins sharp.





2

EMBELLISHING

If you are going to embroider or embellish your filled shape then sometimes it's best to embroider each fabric piece before assembling them. For other projects, you should embroider them after joining the fabric pieces together but before filling. This is particularly so if the embroidery is worked over the seams. Your pattern will advise on which is the best order to work in. Sometimes you add stitches after you have filled the shape, particularly if you want to use them to sculpt the piece. For example, if you are making a fabric doll, you can embroider the features, fingers and toes on with back stitches through the filling as well. This pulls the fabric into the shape to create definition and is excellent for creating body features.

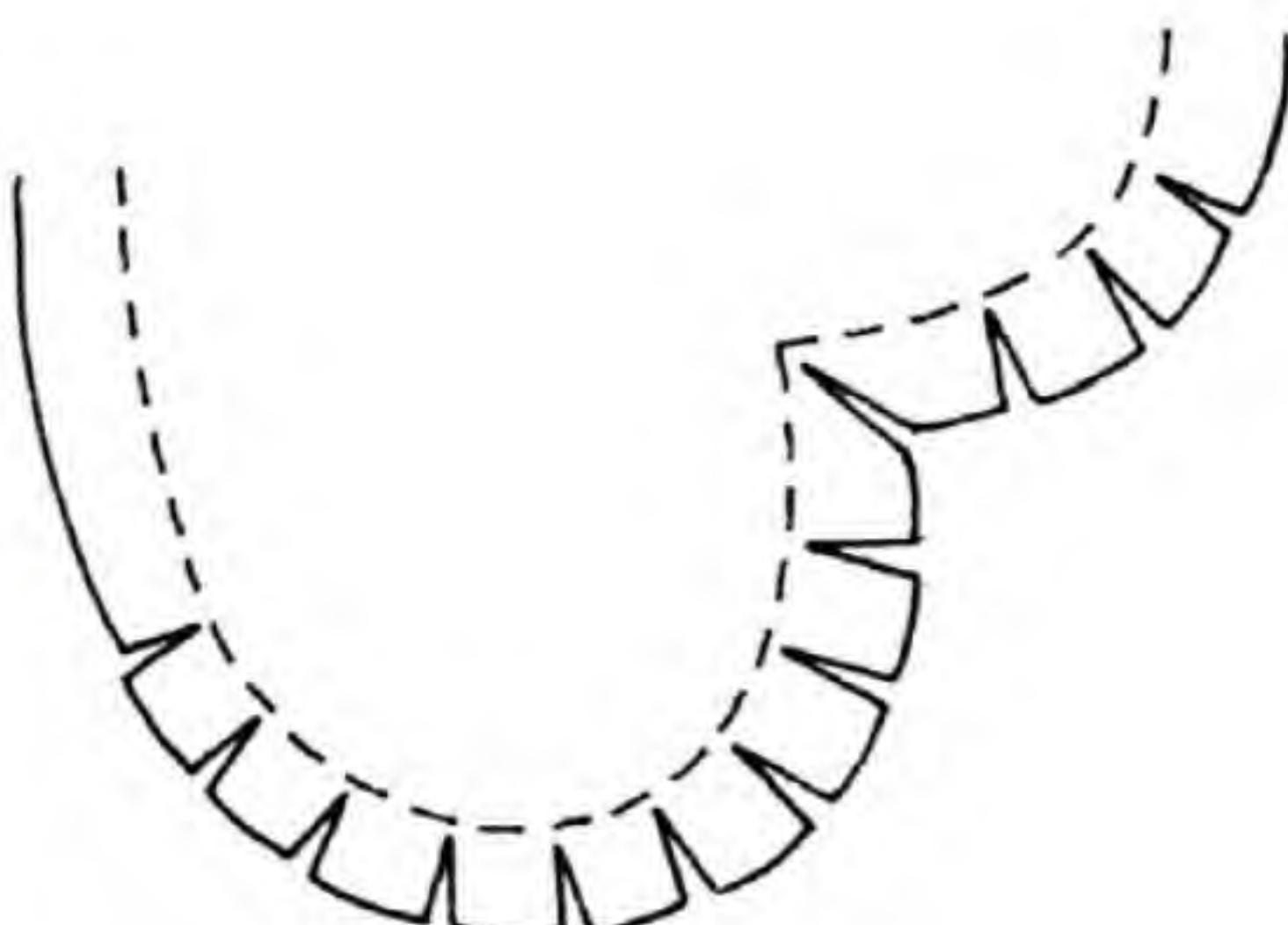
PRESSING

As you stitch each seam, press it as you go for a neater finish. If it's too fiddly to do this with an iron then finger-press the seams open instead. To do this, support the seam inside with one hand then open the seam and run a moistened finger from your other hand along the seam. Leave to dry before turning right sides out.

Alternatively, you can make a pad from a folded tea towel and put this under the seam to press it with an iron without creasing the rest of the fabric.

TURNING OUT

Once all the seams are stitched, trimmed and pressed, you can turn your finished piece right sides out. If there are any corners, push these out into a point gently



3

with a pin or bodkin, but take care when doing this as the snipped seam allowance could fray and show on the right side.

FINISHING

Finally, close up the gap in the seam (that you used to turn your piece right side out) with small, neat hand stitches.



HOW TO STUFF

1 If you are using soft toy filling then gently tease the stuffing apart before you push it in. Don't just add

dense lumps of filling or the finished effect will be bumpy. To push the filling into narrow areas and points, use a rounded tool such as the end of a

paintbrush or wooden spoon - don't use a pointed tool, as it could break the stitches.

2 If you are using one of the other fillings then it's best to pour it in. Roll a piece of paper into a funnel and stick it together with tape. Push the narrow end of the funnel into the gap in your filled shape and pour in your filling (fig. 4). A small teaspoon can also be used for smaller shapes.

3 Pin the pressed edges of the gap closed, then slipstitch the edges together (fig. 5). Make sure you make these stitches particularly small if you are using rice or sawdust.



FIG. 4



FIG. 5



Portable doorstop

By Cheryl Owen

Doorstops are a really handy item to have around the house... practise your machine sewing skills to make your own

Besides its practical purpose, this doorstop makes a strong visual statement with the use of vibrant patterned fabric. The handle at the top enables it to be moved with ease from place to place where needed.

We've used rice to provide a weighty filling, but you could use sand to make it heavier or dried beans to make it lighter. It's best to use furnishing fabric, either in curtain or upholstery weight, so your doorstop is strong enough to hold the filling.

The doorstop is made from six different pieces so you can use up your fabric stash and cut each piece from a different colour or pattern for a really fun look. Or use your embroidery or appliqué skills to decorate each piece before you sew them all together.

YOU WILL NEED

- One piece of furnishing fabric: 30x137cm (12x54in)
- Iron-on medium interfacing: 12.5x8cm (5x3¼in)
- Uncooked rice: 1.75kg (3¾lb)
- Thread in matching colours
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

17cm (7in) tall x 13cm (5in) deep

Seam allowance

1cm (½in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms



Little Book of Home Sewing Techniques
by Cheryl Owen

Author, fashion designer and dressmaker Cheryl Owen has packed her book full of simple sewing tutorials and contemporary projects for the home. It's great for beginners, plus you get to try some next-step tricks like ruching, tassels and frills too!

Published by New Holland, £9.99
www.newhollandpublishers.com



SEWING THE DOORSTOP



1 MAKE THE HANDLE

Press interfacing to the wrong side of the handle piece. To make the handle, press under 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) on the long edges, then press lengthways in half, right sides together matching the pressed edges. Stitch close to both pressed edges. Pin the handle across the centre of the right side of the doorstop top, matching raw edges. Stitch in place 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) inside the raw edges.



2 SEW THE GUSSETS

With right sides facing, stitch the gussets together along the long slanted edges, starting and finishing 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) from the top and bottom of each seam. Press seams open.

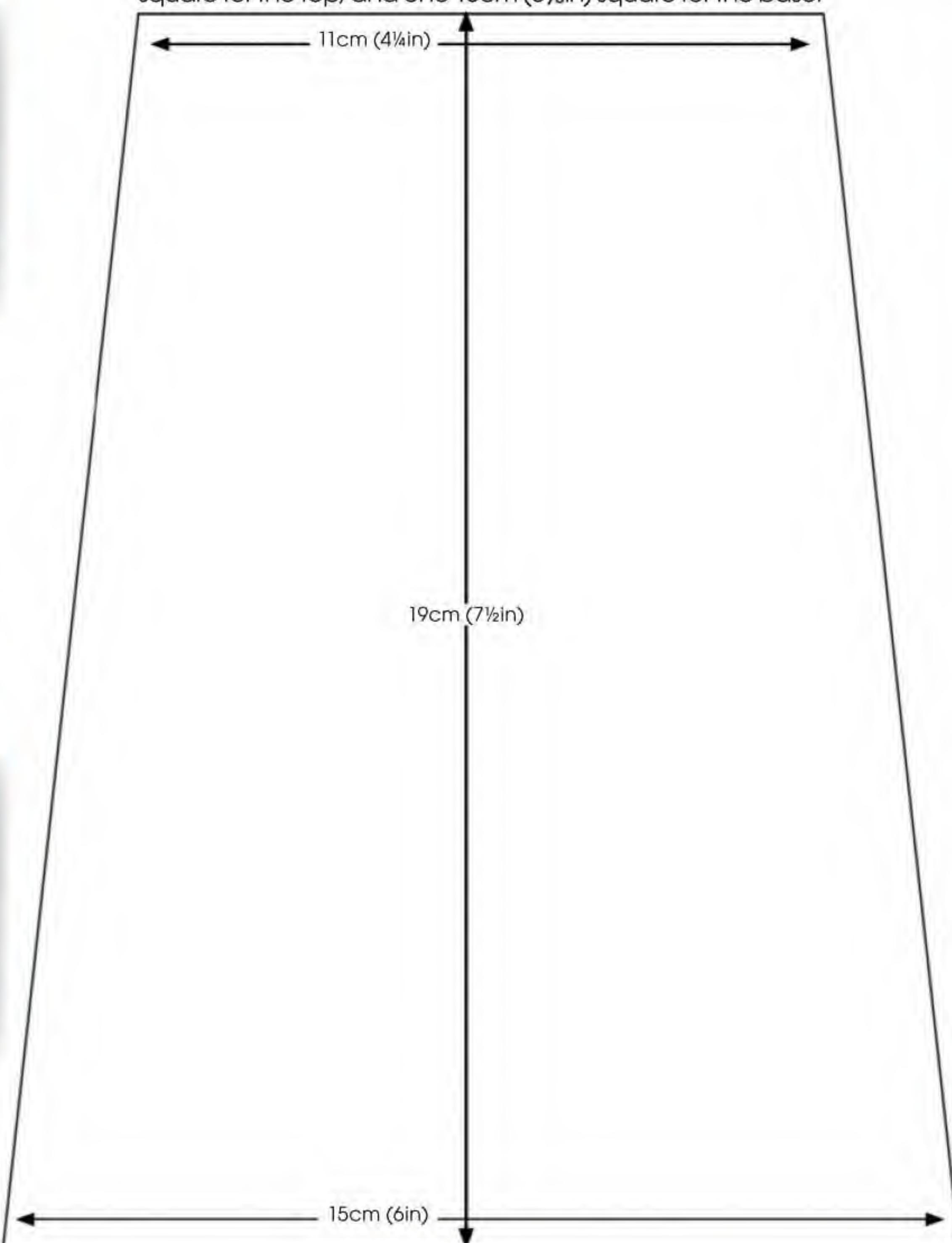


3

Pin the gussets to the doorstop top and base, matching the corners. Stitch, pivoting the seam at the corners, leaving a 10cm (4in) gap in one edge of the base to turn through.

CUTTING OUT THE FABRIC

Use this template to make a paper pattern for the gusset. From the fabric cut: four doorstop gussets from your pattern, one 12.5x8cm piece (5x3 $\frac{1}{4}$ in) for the handle, one 11cm (4 $\frac{1}{4}$ in) square for the top, and one 15cm (5 $\frac{7}{8}$ in) square for the base.



4

Clip the corners, press the seams open, then turn the whole doorstop right side out.



5

To define the gusset seams, fold along one seam, wrong sides facing. Topstitch 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) from folded edge, starting and finishing 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) from top and base. Repeat on the other seams. Fill with rice then slip stitch the gap.



Sebastian the softie snail

By Melanie McNeice

What an adorable, cuddly creature! Who can resist our cotton-soft, summery snail to adorn a nursery or play room?

Sebastian the Snail is such a sweet little creature – his face is so smiley and sunny. He goes about his day as silent as can be, crawling among the beautiful flowers in the garden, and at the end of a busy day romping about, he likes nothing better than coming indoors, cuddled tightly in little arms. He would make the perfect companion for any little explorer!

Make him with a fun collection of pretty fabric pieces leftover from other projects.

YOU WILL NEED

- Fabric for main body: one fat quarter: 46x56cm (18x22in)
- Fabric for shell and antennae: 30x46cm (12x18in)
- Lightweight fusible fleece: 30x20cm (12x8in)
- Small scraps of wool felt for eyes: blue and white
- Stranded cotton in assorted colours
- Sewing thread in matching colours
- Template plastic
- Polyester toy filling
- Basic sewing kit (see page 12)

Finished size

19cm (7½in) high x 22cm (8½in) long

Seam allowance

6mm (¼in) included

Glossary

Turn to page 16 for our list of terms

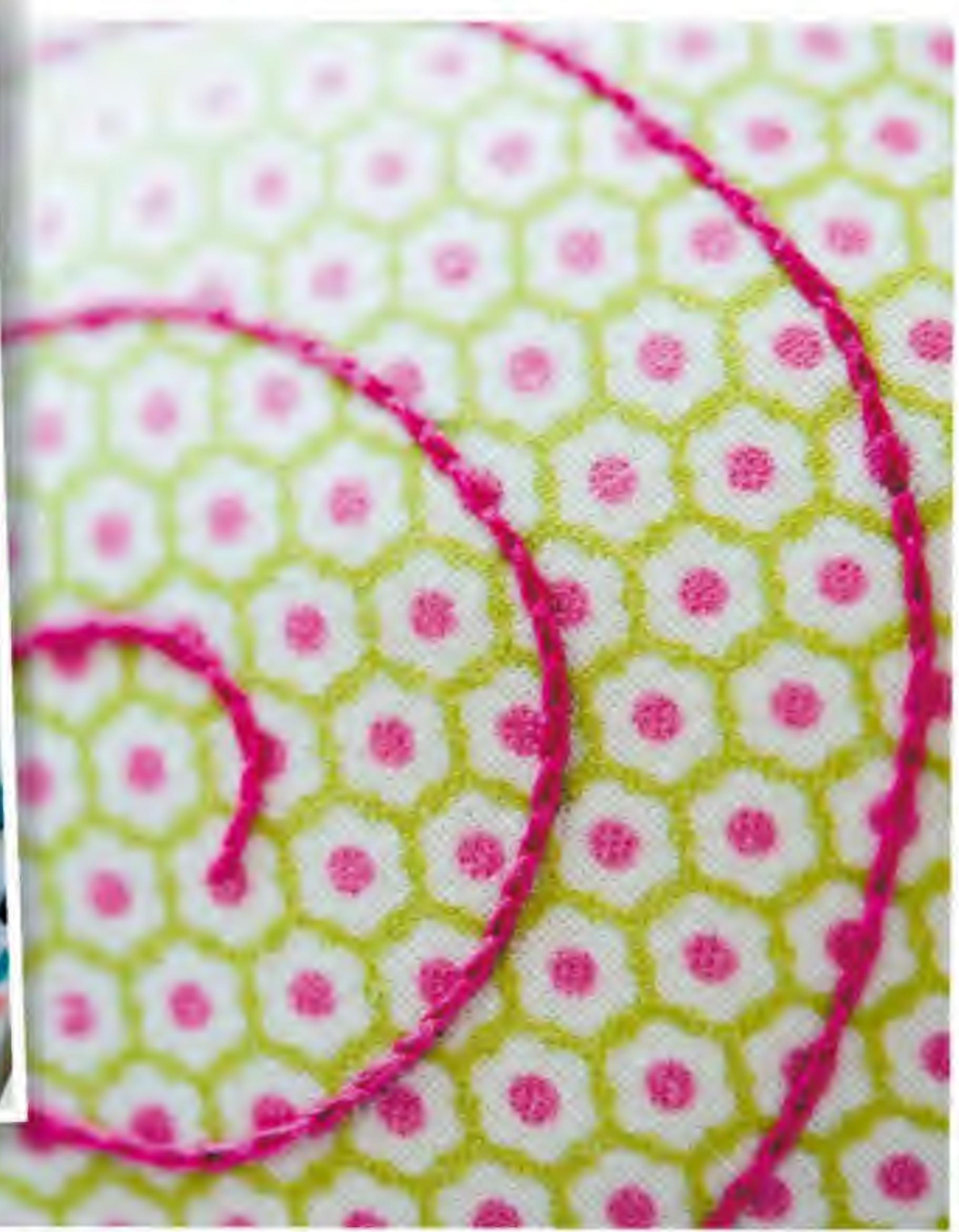


Snug as a Bug
by Melanie McNeice

If you love bugs, you'll adore this collection of soft, squishy creatures, each buzzing with lovable personalities, and all made from Melly and Me's range of gorgeous printed fabrics (www.mellyandme.com). Apart from Sebastian – the cuddliest snail in the world – we love the ladybug handbag and butterfly mobile. It includes a handy guide to embroidery stitches, too.

Published by David and Charles, PB, £7.99
www.stitchcraftcreate.co.uk





MAKING THE SOFTIE

Note: Use a very small stitch on your sewing machine.

1 MAKE TEMPLATES

Using the templates, trace Sebastian onto template plastic, transferring all the markings. Carefully cut them out around the traced lines.

2 CUT THE FABRIC

Fold the main body fabric in half with right sides together. Draw around the main body template once onto the folded fabric and cut out along the drawn line to make two main body pieces. Unfold the fabric and draw around the head and base gusset templates once onto the wrong side of the single layer of fabric. Cut out along the drawn lines.

3 START STITCHING

Take the head and base gusset pieces and machine stitch together along the neckline edge as marked, with right sides facing.

4 SEW THE BODY

Take one of the main body pieces and the joined gusset piece. Matching up the neckline seam of the gusset with the neck on the snail's main body, tack the gusset in place with right sides facing, working from the snail's tail, along the base and all the way around the head. Machine stitch the gusset in place.

5 SEW ALONG THE BACK

Tack the remaining raw edge of the gusset to the second main body piece with right sides facing. Machine stitch in place and then continue to sew the remaining raw edges of the snail's back together, leaving the turning gap open as indicated.

6 STUFF THE BODY

Carefully snip the tail point and the corners. Turn Sebastian right side out, and stuff firmly with toy filling. Ladder stitch the turning gap closed.

7 CUT OUT THE SHELL

Fold the shell fabric in half with right sides facing. Draw around the shell template twice and the shell gusset template once onto the folded fabric and cut out along the drawn lines.

8 EMBROIDER THE SPIRALS

Mark the shell spiral onto one shell front piece and one shell back piece. Interface one shell gusset piece and the two shell pieces marked with the spirals. Embroider the spirals with small chain stitches using two strands of pink stranded cotton.

9 STITCH THE SHELL

Tack the gusset (with fleece) between the two embroidered shell pieces with right sides together, matching the stars marked on the templates. Machine stitch in place. Repeat with the remaining shell and gusset pieces (without fleece) to make the shell lining.



Top tip
If the snail is well stuffed, it will be easier to stitch the face details and attach the antennae

10 FINISH THE SHELL

Place the main shell and shell lining pieces together with right sides facing, and machine stitch all the way around the raw edges. Snip into the corners and curves. Cut a turning gap in the centre of the shell lining, making sure that you cut the lining layer only, and turn the shell right side out through this gap. Press, then topstitch all the way around the bottom edge.

11 STUFF THE SHELL

Stuff the shell lightly and then sit it on the snail's back in the desired position. Pin or tack into place. Ladder stitch the inner bottom edge of the shell onto the snail's back using a double strand of strong polyester thread. When you are approx 2.5-5cm (1-2in) from finishing the sewing, stuff the shell firmly through the remaining gap until you are happy with the shape. Ladder stitch the gap closed.

12 TRACE THE ANTENNAE

Take the remaining shell fabric and fold in half, right sides together. Draw the antennae templates onto the folded fabric but do not cut out.

13 SEW THE ANTENNAE

Machine stitch the antennae along the drawn lines, leaving the bottom straight edges open for turning. Cut them out approx 3-6mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ in) outside the sewn lines. Turn right side out and stuff with filling, taking care not to damage the seams. Fold the raw edges to the inside, then stitch the antennae in place on the snail's head by ladder stitching along the folded bottom edge. Sew around the base of each antenna twice to make sure they are securely stitched on. **TIP** To turn small pieces easily, insert a pair of tweezers into your unturned piece, grab the end and pull it through the opening. When stuffing small and fiddly pieces, it can be helpful to use the blunt end of a wooden skewer to push in small pieces of stuffing one at a time.

14 MAKE THE EYES

Draw around the pupil template twice onto white wool felt and cut out along the drawn lines. Position the pupils onto blue wool felt, making sure there is adequate space around each one. To appliquéd the pupils in place, blanket stitch by hand or statin stitch by machine. Mark the eye dot inside each pupil and work a French knot with six strands of grey stranded cotton. Draw the eye template around each pupil and cut out the completed eyes along the drawn lines.

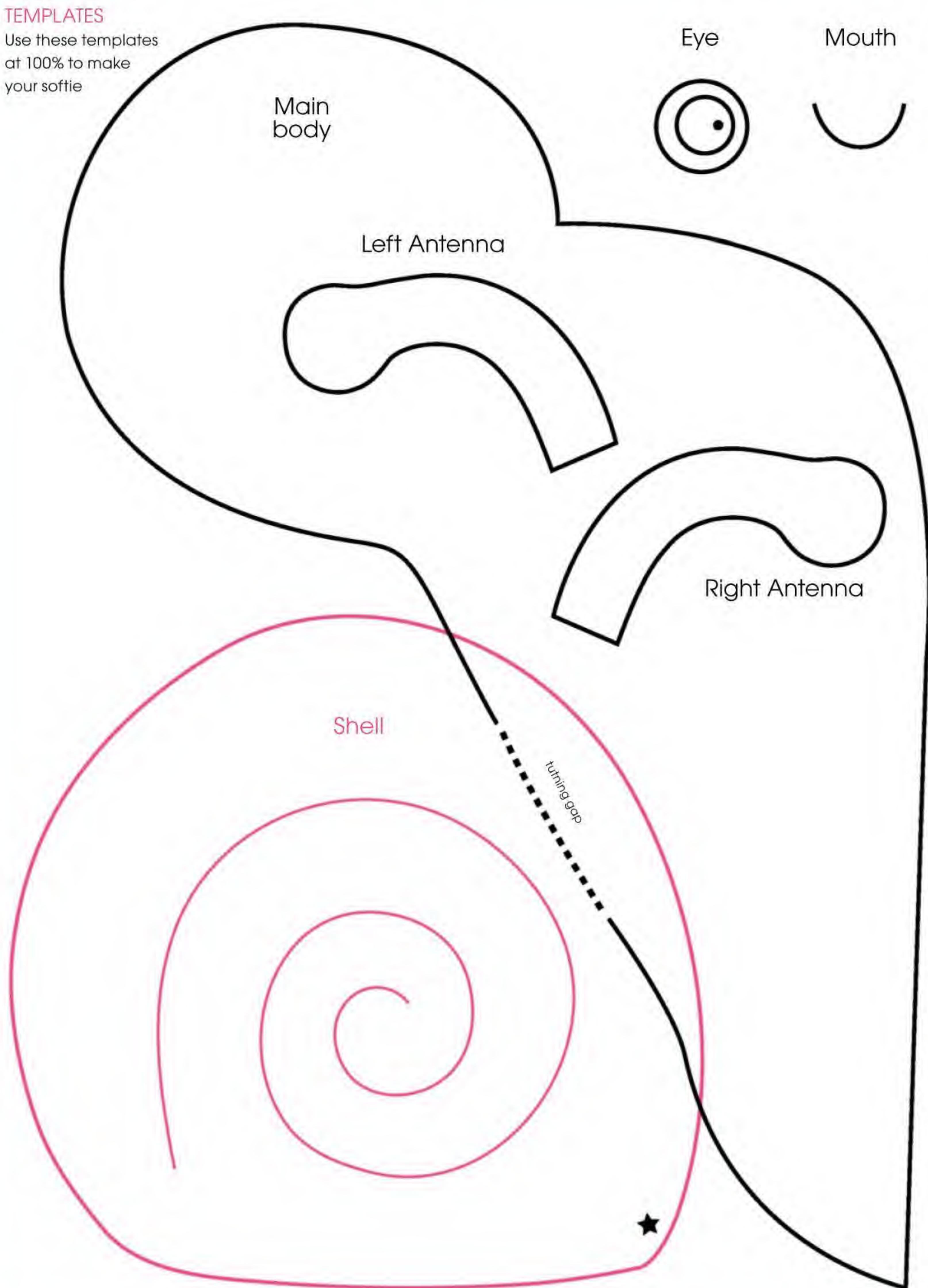
15 SEW THE FACE

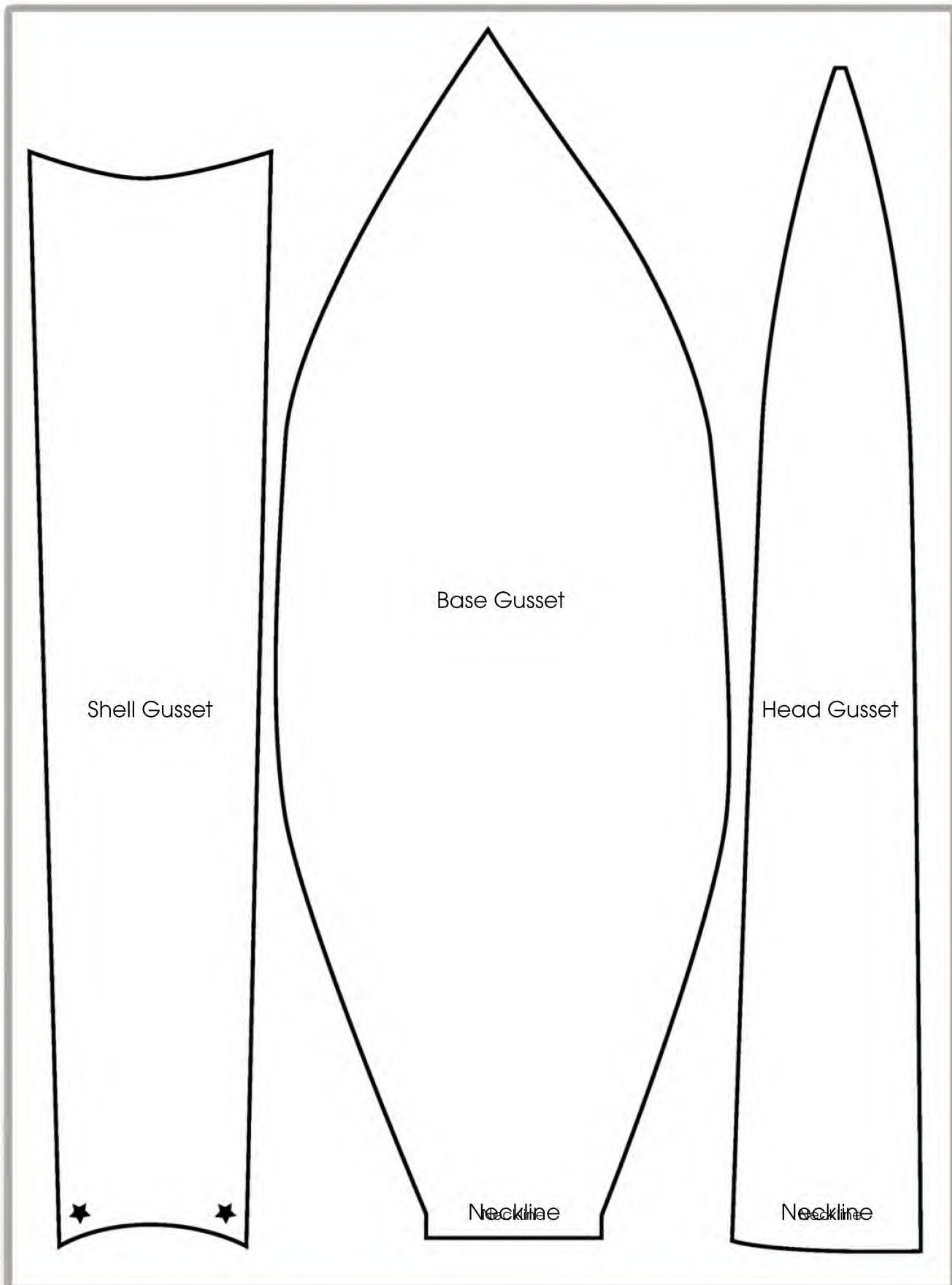
Position the eyes onto the snail's face and glue or tack into position. Using two strands of blue stranded cotton, blanket stitch the eyes to secure in place. Mark the stitching line for the snail's mouth between the eyes, and sew with chain stitch using two strands of dark grey stranded cotton.



TEMPLATES

Use these templates
at 100% to make
your softie





Next steps...

Now you've mastered the basics, you're ready to take your sewing to the next level! Have fun with frills, pleats, zips, piping & pro appliqué... just a few of the next tempting techniques you can explore

ZIP IT!

Zips are a nifty way to close cushion or seat covers, and they're ideal for securely closing fabric bags. Opt for lightweight nylon zips for small make-up bags or sturdy metal zips for shoulder satchels. Inserting zips can be one of the trickiest sewing skills to master but the key is to take your time, work methodically and tack everything before you stitch. Pick a zip that suits the weight of fabric you're stitching on to, and always check it works before you sew it in... there's nothing worse than inserting the zip then finding it's faulty!



FANTASTIC ELASTIC

Elastic is a handy little helper to have in your sewing kit. It'll give your fabric fullness and help to control it. It's ideal for waistbands, pyjamas bottoms or fancy dress costumes. It's also pretty nifty for making loose chair covers (thread it through a hem edge for a perfect fit) or use it in a casing for an easy-fit ironing board cover.

You can stitch with elastic by inserting sewing thread into the top bobbin of your sewing machine and shirring elastic in the bottom bobbin. We call this 'gathering' if you only stitch one row or 'shirring' if you stitch more than one.

Frills and pleats

Frills and pleats can add a stylish finishing touch to your home-sewn projects. Create frills from a single or double layer of fabric (single frills can add a simple decorative edge to a cushion, while double frills offer 'wow' factor). Making pleats is another way of adding fullness to your finished fabric. Have a play around with different types – they have great names like knife pleats, box pleats, inverted box pleats or pin tucks! They all offer different effects and are great ways to add texture to your creations.





Perfect piping

Covered piping adds a perfect finishing touch to soft furnishings like cushion covers. You can pick a fabric that matches your cushion exactly, or choose one that highlights the piped edge with a contrasting colour or pattern. Piping cord comes in a range of thicknesses. As a general guide, the smaller your item, the thinner the cord you should use.

You can buy cotton twist cord or synthetic cord – try them both to see which you prefer. Secure your piping in place with your sewing machine's zipper or piping foot. Piping feet have a ridge that sits on top of the piping cord, holding it firmly in place.



SUPER SEAMS

Now you've mastered your basic seams, you can move on to working with more complex types, which come in handy for different effects. Flat felled seams are often used when both sides of the fabric need to be invisible, for example to make joins in a tablecloth or sheet. Narrow seams are ideal for sheer or more delicate fabrics as they're neater and stand out less. French seams are narrow seams which are perfect for fabrics that fray. A bound seam encloses the raw fabric edges within a strip of bias binding tape, to strengthen the finished item and prevent it from fraying.

PRO APPLIQUÉ

If you enjoy hand appliquéd then the next step is to try reverse appliquéd. This is when you layer up fabrics, then cut away from the top layer to reveal the fabric beneath. Use two different-coloured or patterned pieces of fabric of the same size and trace the shape you want to cut out on to the right side of one piece. Now cut it out, then put it on top of the other piece of fabric and tack them together.

Turn the edges of the top piece under and stitch into place. Use your needle to fold the edges under and stitch as you go with small, neat stitches.



HAND QUILTING

If you enjoy patchwork then hand quilting is great for creating a homespun feel. Quilting involves three layers of fabric – the top layer, wadding sandwiched in the middle, then a bottom layer of backing fabric. Tack these three layers together to hold them firmly in place before you quilt.

Quilting is basically a running stitch worked through all three layers of fabric and wadding. Put one hand under the quilt to make sure the point of your needle always goes right through to the back, then use your other hand to stitch with. Make a few running stitches on your needle then pull it all the way through. Hand quilting stitches need to be small with evenly spaced gaps in between.



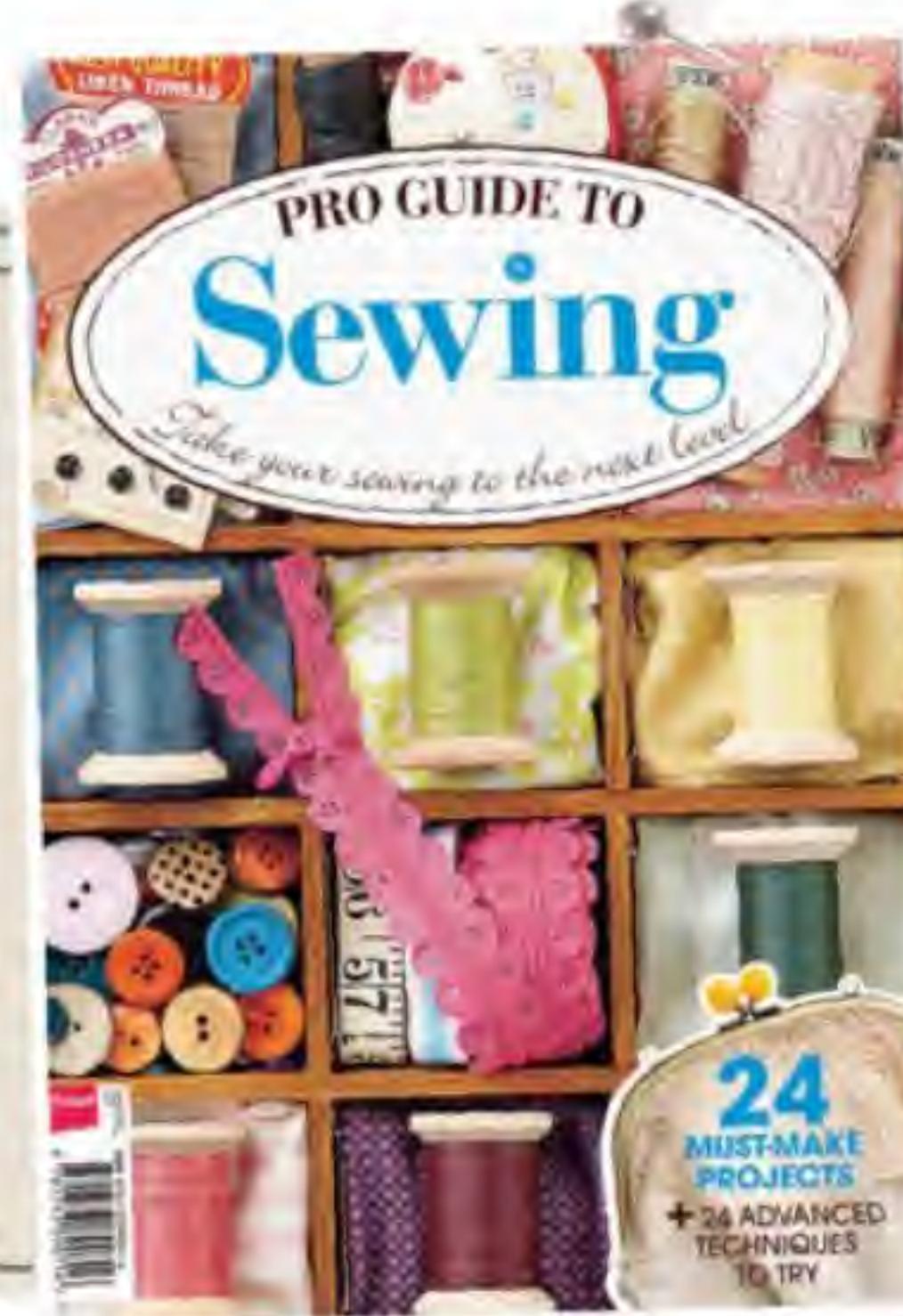
More fun with bag making

You can make all sorts of different style fabric bags, but adding bag hardware to them is certain to give a professional finish. Try these ideas...

Magnetic snap closures are easy to attach to your bag and provide a quick way of closing it without the need for buttons or buckles. Twist locks are used to close the front of the bag and are best used on bags made from heavier-weight fabrics so the bag will support the metal closures. Instead of just stitching your strap directly to your bag, you could attach a D-ring to the bag and a trigger hook to the strap – that way you can remove the straps if you want, which is ideal if you want to add both a handle and a shoulder strap. You can also buy clasp frames, which attach directly to the top of your bag, either with stitching or glue.

LEARN MORE TECHNIQUES

Once you've mastered all the tutorials and projects in our *Beginner's Guide to Sewing*, it's time to try some of the next-step techniques we've described above. You can find tips, tricks and tutorials for them all in the *Pro Guide to Sewing*, which includes all sorts of must-make projects that use the methods we've described here. You'll find many of the techniques you've learnt in this guide are used again but taken one step further, and with 24 projects and 15 tutorials to try, you're sure to find inspiration. With a little practise you'll soon transform your sewing skills from a newbie into a needle ninja in no time! Find out more or treat yourself to a copy at www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk.







“SEWING IS EASY WHEN
YOU KNOW HOW. THIS
BOOK WILL TEACH YOU!”

*Simple techniques
with stunning results*

*Make gorgeous
textiles for your home*